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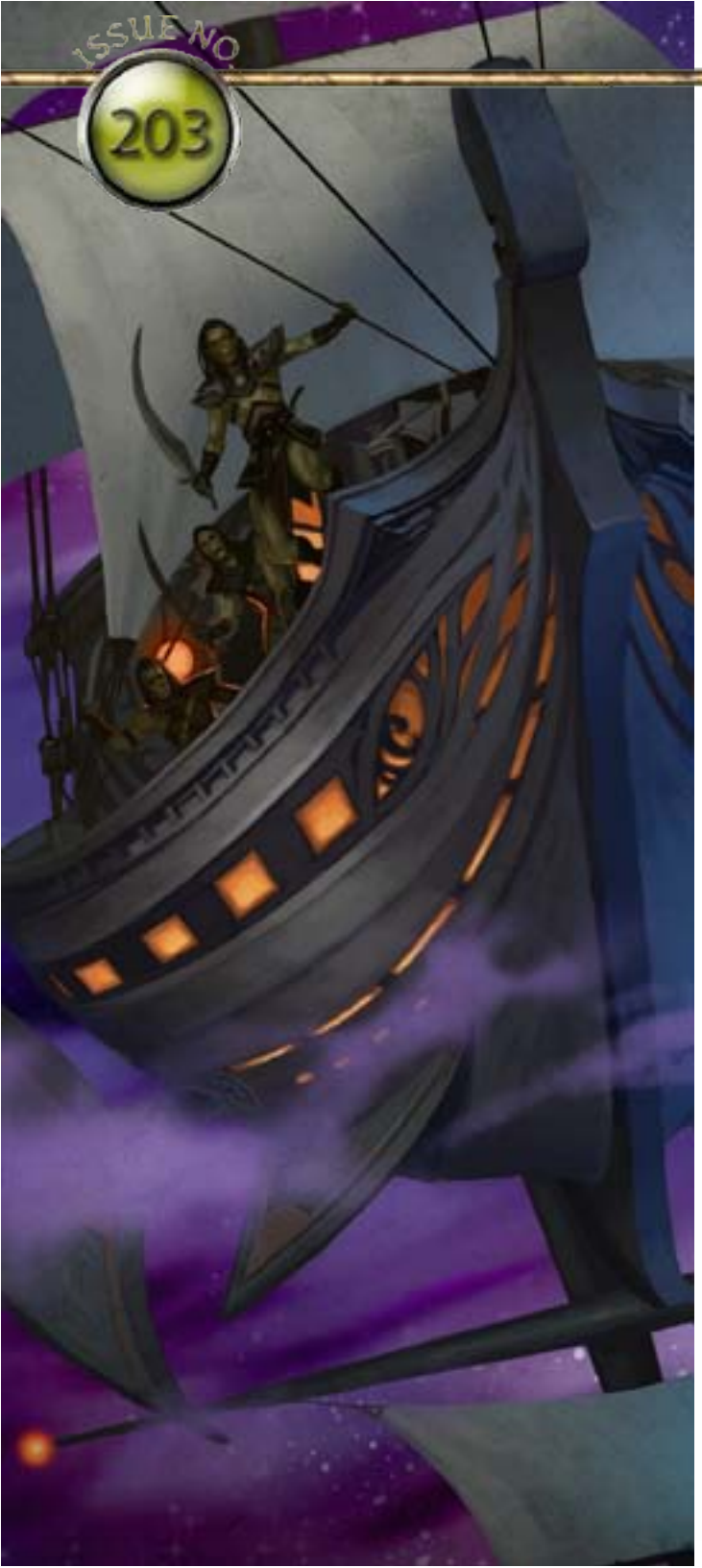
DUNGEON

A Dungeons & Dragons® Roleplaying Game Supplement



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DUNGEON

Editorial:
Anchors Aweigh

By Christopher Perkins

Illustration by Wayne England

When I was in high school, I ran a Spelljammer® campaign for my friends that lasted just shy of five years. The players had their own ship, which meant they could go almost anywhere they wanted, and they sank a considerable portion of their hard-won loot into equipping it with the finest weapons and crew. Each week, they raised anchor and set sail for another planet or asteroid in search of adventure while fending off space orcs, githyanki pirates, neogi slavers, illithid nautiloids, and other threats.

In the earliest stages of playtesting 4th Edition, I began to imagine a campaign world composed mostly of water and dotted with thousands of islands, each one ruled by a dragon overlord, each one filled with the promise of adventure. Nautical adventures fuel my romantic notion of heroes on the open sea, heading toward a distant horizon, discovering what the campaign has to offer, and charting their own destinies. I also have a fondness for ship-to-ship warfare. My mind's eye gets misty when I imagine ships exchanging ballista fire, sailors swinging from mast to mast, and blades clashing on storm-wracked decks.

If you've read my weekly column, *The Dungeon Master Experience*, you already know a great deal about my 4th Edition nautical campaign. What you probably don't know is how close I came to setting the campaign in the Astral Sea, that gossamer expanse upon which float the island-like dominions of the gods. I imagined the heroes forging alliances with the powers of good against the forces of evil, perhaps becoming demigods in their own right. The campaign would start small, with the heroic tier heroes joining the crew of an astral galleon, completing quests on the captain's behalf until she sees fit to retire and leave her beloved ship in their care. As they advance, the heroes would earn many powerful friends and enemies, and by epic tier they'd be choosing sides in a heavenly war cleverly orchestrated by Asmodeus. However, Bill Slavicsek was toying with the idea of running an Astral Sea campaign for our Thursday night game, which prompted me to take my campaign in a slightly different direction. Thus, the world of Iomandra was born.

This month is all about ships and the sea. In *Dungeon*, we have adventures featuring a githyanki pirate ship on the Astral Sea and a sunken wreck haunted by a ghost kraken. In *Dragon*, we have a new character theme for seaborne heroes called the mariner, and the *Falling Star*, a ship that would make an excellent mobile base of operations for seafaring adventurers. Throw in some nautical campaign-building advice and a host of Astral Sea perils, and you've got plenty of inspiration for heroes and adventures on the high seas. Once you get your sea legs, drop us a note at dndinsider@wizards.com, and tell us what you think!

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Grasp of Thalarkis

A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 13-15

By Craig Campbell

Illustrations by Jim Nelson and Wayne England

Cartography by Mike Schley

Introduction

"Grasp of Thalarkis" begins in a small fishing village on the shore of a large sea. The bulk of the adventure takes place beneath the waves, at the wreckage of a legendary adventuring ship and at an unholy shrine constructed by a band of kuo-toas.

The kuo-toas seek to free the spirit of a mighty kraken that haunts the wreckage of a ship. Should the kuo-toas succeed in their plans, the ghost kraken will no longer be bound to the wreck and can terrorize the seas once again in its new undead form.

"Grasp of Thalarkis" is a Dungeons & Dragons adventure for characters of levels 13-15.

Background

Fifty-seven years ago, the seas around the peaceful fishing village of Dorgal's Cove were terrorized by the kraken Thalarkis. The great beast laid waste to the region, sinking ships and killing sailors. It brought financial devastation to all of the outlying towns and islands, destroying the local fishing economy and bringing seagoing trade to a halt.

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As the smaller coastal communities neared financial ruin, a shining beacon appeared in answer to their plight. The *Zephyr*, a famed privateer captained by Rukos the Red Rake, came to the rescue.

Rukos and his crew set out to save the locals from the waterborne menace. After a few days of hunting, they spotted the kraken and harpooned it, then used winches to haul it to the surface. With cutlass, bow, and spell, they laid into the beast. The battle was long, and sailor after sailor fell until only Captain Rukos remained to face Thalarkis.

With his trusty cutlass *Everdare* firmly in hand, the Red Rake squared off with the gravely injured kraken. In the end, Rukos stabbed the beast through the eye as Thalarkis strangled the life out of the brave captain. Rukos fell to the deck, dead. The great beast shuddered and slumped into the sea, taking the *Zephyr*, its crew, and its captain to the depths below.

The spirits of Thalarkis and Rukos linger still, bound to the wreckage of the *Zephyr*. The ghost of Rukos stands at the ship's wheel, doomed to haunt the deck alone. Thalarkis's spirit is trapped in the wreckage of the ship. The ghost kraken can animate parts of the ship but can't attack directly until it is freed from its attachment to the vessel.

In the intervening years, the towns and villages along the coast prospered. The people returned. Trade resumed. Fishers went back to their nets. And the story of the *Zephyr* and the kraken took its place among the greatest of local legends.

Recent History

Two months ago, the calm seas around Dorgal's Cove grew rough once again. A nomadic group of kuo-toas, led by a whip named Kraal, passed through the area. When they came upon the wreck of the *Zephyr*, they sensed the ghost kraken's presence.

MUTINY!

Unbeknownst to all but the now-dead crew, a mutiny nearly broke out on the *Zephyr* while it searched for the kraken.

The *Zephyr*'s boatswain, a half-orc named Torgath, attempted to gather support to overthrow the captain and save the crew members from what he believed to be certain doom. Captain Rukos's behavior had grown erratic and dangerous in the months preceding the kraken hunt. Torgath believed the sword *Everdare* compelled Rukos to put his ship and crew in unnecessary jeopardy.

The captain ferreted out the conspiracy before Torgath could gain the full support of the crew. He confined the half-orc to the brig, and Torgath drowned alone in his cell when the ship was pulled under.

Torgath still inhabits his cell beneath the waves. The Raven Queen reanimated him as a revenant so that he might bring true death to the kraken and the captain, both of whom now haunt the wreckage of the *Zephyr* as restless spirits.

Thalarkis, driven insane by his decades of ghostly imprisonment, touched Kraal's mind with whispers of power and prestige. Kraal came to believe that Thalarkis is one of the kuo-toas' ineffable gods. Thalarkis did nothing to counter the whip's belief, hoping that the kuo-toas would ultimately free him from his ephemeral bonds and help him gain revenge on the surface dwellers.

The kuo-toas scavenged everything of value they could find in the *Zephyr*'s wreckage and began building a shrine to Thalarkis. Kraal intends to perform a ritual to release their ghost kraken "god."

In the past few weeks, kuo-toa raiding parties have begun attacking fishing and trading vessels on the surface, gathering corpses and treasure for the ritual to free the ghost kraken. Only when Thalarkis is free can he begin a full-scale kuo-toa invasion of the surface world.

Running the Adventure

"Grasp of Thalarkis" is presented as a series of location-based events. After visiting Dorgal's Cove, the characters explore multiple locations on the ocean's floor, beginning with the sunken remains of the *Zephyr*. These events are designed to take place in the order they are presented. Clues discovered along the way guide the characters from one location to the next and allow them to piece together what is actually happening beneath the waves.

It's possible for the characters to skip locations and still succeed in their endeavors, but they'll have an easier time if they visit every location and learn all they can before confronting Kraal in the kuo-toa shrine and, eventually, returning to the ship to dispose of Thalarkis. It's important for the characters to learn how Torgath and the ghost of Captain Rukos play into the story, so that the adventurers are motivated to utterly destroy the ghost kraken and quell the threat for good.

Read through all the encounters to get a sense of how they relate to one another. When the characters find the first part of the sunken ship, they can travel fairly easily to other ship sections; the three parts of the ship have settled in a straight line across a span of several hundred feet on the ocean floor.

Involving the Characters

Use one of the following hooks to entice the characters to become the newest heroes of Dorgal's Cove, or craft one of your own that ties into your campaign in a more significant way.

- The characters learn of the village's troubles while traveling nearby. They hear that the village elders have put out a call for heroes to save them from marauding sea creatures.
- If the adventurers are traveling on a ship near the village, they come across the aftermath of a kuo-toa raid. A single survivor leads them to Dorgal's Cove, where they can learn more about what's happening.
- Your ongoing campaign might involve the characters travelling to a small village for purposes unrelated to this adventure. Make Dorgal's Cove their destination for that quest, and introduce this adventure when they arrive.

Quests

In addition to the rewards the characters can earn in this adventure's encounters, they can gain some additional XP rewards by completing three quests.

MAJOR QUEST: HELP TORGATH ATONE

14th-level Major Quest (1,000 XP/character)

Torgath is on a personal quest to atone for his attempted mutiny. The characters earn this quest reward if they actively engage Torgath and help him atone for his betrayal. If the characters simply use information he provides to aid them in their quest or use him as a helpful combatant, they do not earn this quest reward.

GHOSTS IN THE DEPTHS

"Grasp of Thalarkis" is an underwater ghost story. The ghost kraken Thalarkis is at the heart of the story, despite the fact that many of the enemies are kuo-toas. The ghost of Rukos and the undead boatswain also feed into this tale.

When the characters visit the various parts of the ship, make them aware that their surroundings are not quite right. The waterlogged ship creaks and sways menacingly. Shadows play at the edges of the party's light. Parts of the ship might animate.

Furthermore, the characters are at the bottom of the ocean, far from any kind of aid or rescue. Oppressive, dark water looms above them. They are truly alone.

MINOR QUEST: REASSURE THE VILLAGERS

15th-level Minor Quest (250 XP/character)

The townsfolk of Dorgal's Cove are fearful of what's happening at sea and worried that their village will fall to ruin if the raids are not stopped.

The characters earn this quest reward if they actively seek to quell the fear prevalent among the villagers during Event 1. If the characters just take the information gained in Event 1 and move on to other encounters without dealing with the villagers, they do not earn the reward.

MINOR QUEST: RETURN VILLAGER BODIES

15th-level Minor Quest (250 XP/character)

The kuo-toa shrine holds the remains of recently slain villagers. The return of these unfortunates for proper burial earns the party this quest reward.

Event 1: A Village in Need

Exploration/Roleplaying Encounter

The adventurers arrive in Dorgal's Cove, meet the remaining villagers, and learn about what has been happening at sea.

When the characters arrive, read:

A simple, wooden sign greets you with the words, "Welcome to Dorgal's Cove." This small village is quiet, bordering on desolate. As you venture into town, you spot several villagers standing nearby, staring at the ground or looking anywhere but at you.

Perception DC 18: The character spies a few abandoned houses, their shutters askew and doors standing open.

Perception DC 26: The character hears a commotion farther ahead. (This is a heated discussion taking place in the Common House.)

If the characters already know of the trouble here, they might proceed directly toward the Common House. If they don't, let them explore the village.

Generate a sense of quiet desperation in the village by describing the lack of normal activity and the sullen, fearful looks on the villagers' faces.

If the adventurers talk at length with any of the villagers, they learn the basics of the situation. The village is in dire straits, since fishing has come to a halt. People are afraid. Rumors abound of horrible seafolk attacking fishing and trading ships. Some of the villagers are meeting right now in the Common House to discuss the matter.

If the adventurers question multiple villagers, refer to the "Rumors" sidebar. Eventually, someone should direct them to the mayor and the Common House.

Dorgal's Cove

Dorgal's Cove is a fishing village, and roughly half of its population is fishers and their families. It boasts a small, central market square where farmers normally congregate to sell their goods, but this square is now desolate. The village square is also home to the Common House, the only two-story building in the village and the seat of its small government.

A small harbor bordered by rocky outcroppings hosts four short wooden piers where local fisherfolk moor their small vessels.

Population: Currently 200 (previously around 350; mostly humans, with some halflings and half-elves, as well as a smattering of other races).

Government: Lady Theryl Tollinton, a middle-aged human female, serves as mayor of the village. She has lived in Dorgal's Cove all her life and cares deeply for the prosperity of the village. She gladly welcomes anyone who might help her and her people.

An elderly dragonborn male named Boxal serves as the town constable. Boxal is gruff and direct. He considers his position as constable to be a privilege as well as a duty. Boxal welcomes the party's involvement in the village's worries, but secretly harbors a grudge against Lady Theryl for not acting sooner when the village's livelihood came under attack.

If the party enters the Common House, read:
This small meeting chamber contains a crowd of fearful villagers bickering loudly. On a raised dais at the far end of the hall, a middle-aged human woman with graying hair pounds a gavel on a podium. An elderly dragonborn male stands quietly behind her, occasionally glancing at an withered old human man sporting several bruises and cradling his right arm in a sling.

The characters must interject themselves into the chaos to proceed further. If the adventurers announce that they are here to help, Lady Theryl welcomes them as the assembled crowd hushes in awe.

RUMORS

Roll a d6 and refer to the chart below to determine whom the characters meet and what information these villagers provide. The veracity of a given rumor is provided in parentheses at the end of each entry.

1. Litha, an elderly human female, says, "The kraken is back! The kraken is back!" If asked about the kraken, she provides the basics of the legend. (True, although her fearful embellishments might be false.)
2. A young human boy named Rafe claims to have seen a fish-man under one of the village's docks. (False. His imagination has gone wild.)
3. Garissa, a young halfling female (and the town gossip) notes that exactly twenty-seven local fishermen have been taken by the fishfolk. (True.)
4. Rorik Mardahs, a young human male member of the village militia, believes the fishfolk are going to attack the town in the next few days. (Probably true, though he has no facts to back this up.)
5. Lorethal, a middle-aged male half-elf devotee of Melora, believes that Melora has abandoned the villagers for not showing her appropriate reverence in the past. (False.)
6. A young human male named Farbris believes that the village will be left destitute if the troubles on the ocean aren't dealt with soon. (True.)

Once the characters have met Lady Theryl, she ushers them (along with Boxal and the old man wearing the sling) into a back room and brings them up to speed on what is happening.

She introduces them to the old man, Ardrin Mostel. He is the lone survivor of a recent attack at sea, having stubbornly led some of his fellows in an attempt to get some fishing done, despite the recent problems.

Cantankerous and a touch senile, Ardrin recounts how "snarling fish-people" attacked the fishing party, killing everyone else and dragging their bodies beneath the waves. He managed a lucky escape and is guilt-ridden over leaving his friends behind.

He tells the story of Rukos the Red Rake and his battle with the kraken that took place many years ago. The recent attack on Ardrin's boat occurred near where this great battle took place, leading him to believe that the events are related.

Ardrin reveals that, as a young boy, he was on a small fishing boat when he and his now-dead helpers witnessed the battle between the *Zephyr's* crew and the kraken. He knows everything about the great battle, including how Rukos and the kraken killed each other simultaneously. Ardrin saw the *Zephyr* break into pieces as it sank.

Ardrin believes strongly that the recent occurrences at sea will lead to the fishfolk invading in force. (Though he is correct, he has no information to back up this assertion.)

If the adventurers agree to deal with the fishfolk, Lady Theryl offers the only aid she can. She tells them that Boxal will guide them to the center of the area where the fishfolk attacks have taken place, near where the *Zephyr* supposedly went down. She also offers them four scrolls containing the Water's Gift ritual, along with the necessary casting components.

If the characters choose to talk to other villagers to gain more information, refer to the "Rumors" sidebar.

If the characters have their own ship, Boxal can guide them to the site of the famed battle from their vessel. If they have no ship, he takes them out on Ardrin's fishing boat.

Once at sea, Boxal agrees to wait aboard the ship until they return. As the characters depart, he says, "Bring back our dead if you can. They deserve better

CAPTURED!

If, during the course of the adventure, some or all of the characters fall in battle, the kuo-toas might knock them unconscious, strip them of weapons and gear (not armor), and imprison them in the *Zephyr*'s brig (possibly in Torgath's cell). To continue their mission and avoid being sacrifices for the new kuo-toa god, the adventurers must escape.

Two kuo-toa monitors stand guard at the brig. In a pile on the far side of the chamber is all the gear taken from the characters.

than to rot in some fishfolk larder." The characters receive the "Return Villager Bodies" quest.

Treasure: Four scrolls of Water's Gift and all necessary casting components.

Water's Gift Scroll

Level: 10
Component Cost: 400 gp
Casting Time: 5 minutes
Key Skill: Nature

You and up to seven other creatures present for the ritual gain the ability to breathe water as easily as air, to speak underwater normally, and to fight underwater without penalty. Each subject also gains a +5 power bonus to Athletics checks to swim.

Your Nature check result determines the duration of the effect.

Nature Check Result	Duration
14 or lower	3 hours
15-24	6 hours
25 or higher	12 hours

Event 2: Forecastle Deck

Combat Encounter Level 13 (4,300 XP)

The characters come upon the front portion of the ship, which once housed the officers' quarters below the forecastle. Several kuo-toas begin the encounter in a low crawl space beneath the deck, hidden from view.

Light: None.

Monsters: 1 kuo-toa harpooner (H), 4 kuo-toa marauders (M), 2 possessed debris (T).

When characters approach, read:

The front portion of the sunken ship is smashed into the sea floor and lying on the edge of a pit. The deck is mostly intact, but debris is scattered about. A single mast still stands, but has snapped off roughly 10 feet above the deck. Patches of tall, slimy seaweed wave in the mild current. The ship groans and shifts ominously.

Perception DC 20: The character spots an accessible crawl space underneath the deck.

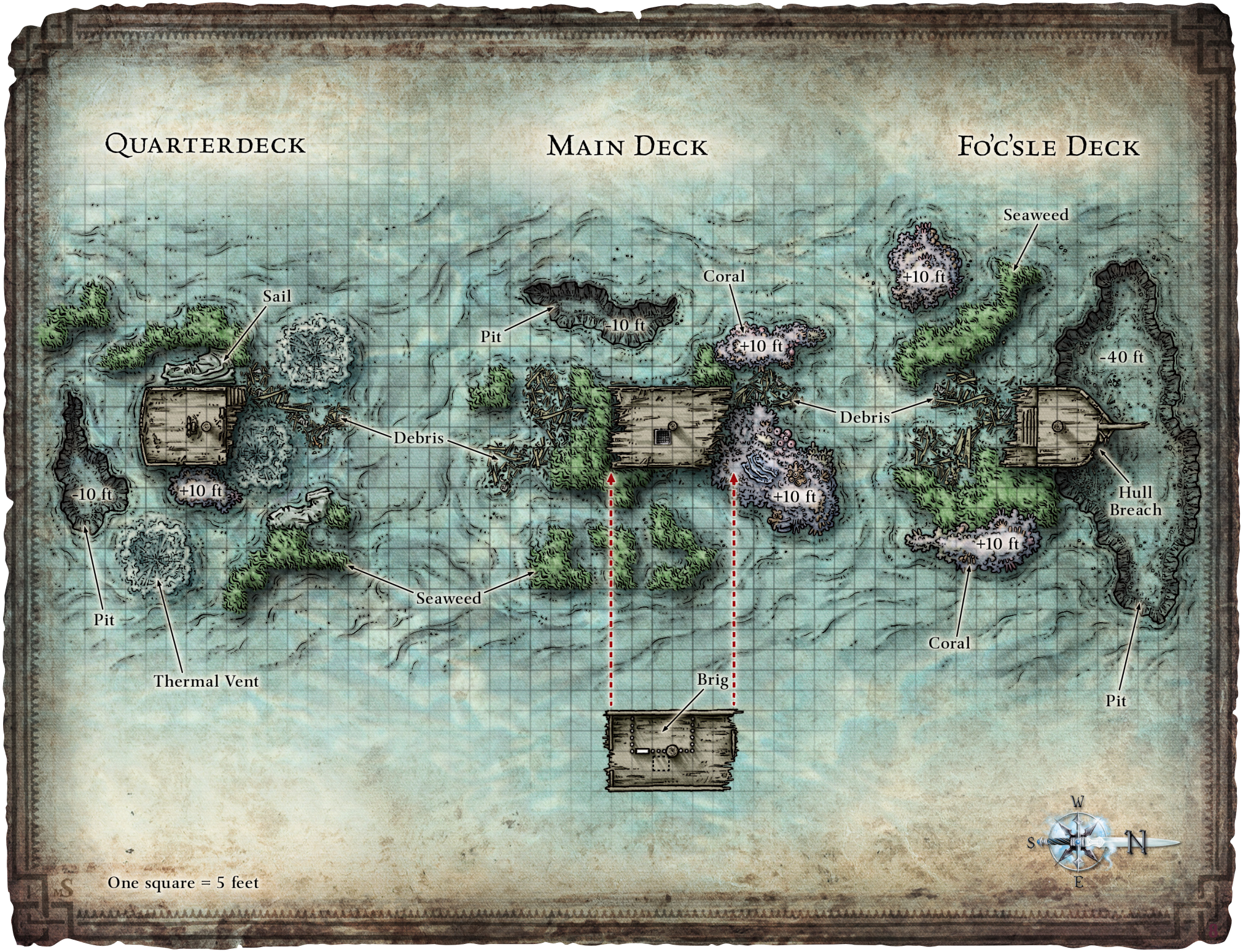
If the characters approach with any light sources, the kuo-toas know the party is coming. Otherwise, the characters can attempt a DC 20 group Stealth check to approach sneakily and gain surprise. If the kuo-toas hear the party coming, they emerge from beneath the forecastle deck as indicated on the map.

Precipice: The wreckage rests on the brink of a 40-feet-deep pit and could fall in. If an attack starts to destabilize the wreckage, describe the crumbling process to build a sense of apprehension.

If any creature uses a burst or blast attack that features forced movement and includes the back portion of the sunken forecastle, the wreckage creaks and sways, leaning closer toward the pit. The second time this occurs, the same thing happens. The third time, the entire forecastle tips over the precipice and falls in.

Kuo-Toa Harpooner (H)	**Level 14 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (aquatic)	XP 1,000
HP 137; **Bloodied** 68	**Initiative** +12
AC 30, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 24	**Perception** +13
Speed 6, swim 6	Darkvision
Traits	
Aquatic	
The kuo-toa can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Harpoon** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 8 damage, and the kuo-toa grabs the target (escape DC 21). Until the grab ends, the target takes ongoing 5 damage, and the kuo-toa can't make attacks using this harpoon.	
⊰ **Reeling Harpoon** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +19 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 8 damage, and the kuo-toa makes a secondary attack against the target.	
Secondary Attack: +17 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, and the kuo-toa pulls the target up to 3 squares.	
Move Actions	
Slick Maneuver ✦ **At-Will**	
Requirement: The kuo-toa must be adjacent to an enemy.	
Effect: The kuo-toa shifts up to 3 squares to another square adjacent to the enemy.	
Triggered Actions	
⸸ **Sticky Shield** ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An adjacent enemy misses the kuo-toa with a melee weapon attack.	
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Melee 1 (the triggering enemy); +17 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The weapon used for the triggering attack drops in the target's space.	
Str 17 (+10) **Dex** 17 (+10) **Wis** 13 (+8)	
Con 17 (+10) **Int** 13 (+8) **Cha** 15 (+9)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech	
Equipment leather armor, slimy light shield, 4 harpoons	

When the wreckage falls, any creature inside or adjacent to it can make a saving throw. On a failure, a creature is drawn down into the pit, takes 4d10


Quarterdeck
Main Deck
Fo'c'sle Deck
Sail
Pit
-10 ft
Coral
+10 ft
Seaweed
+10 ft
-40 ft
Debris
Debris
-10 ft
+10 ft
+10 ft
Hull Breach
+10 ft
Pit
Seaweed
Coral
Thermal Vent
Brig
Pit
W
S
N
E
One square = 5 feet

4 Kuo-Toa Marauders (M)	Level 12 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (aquatic)	XP 700 each
HP 119; **Bloodied** 59	**Initiative** +11
AC 26, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 21 (25 while bloodied)	**Perception** +11
Speed 6, swim 6	Darkvision

Traits

Aquatic

The kuo-toa can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Skewering Spear** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. AC (+19 while bloodied)

Hit: 2d8 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Move Actions

Slick Maneuver ✦ **At-Will**

Requirement: The kuo-toa must be adjacent to an enemy.

Effect: The kuo-toa shifts up to 3 squares to another square adjacent to the enemy.

Minor Actions

Quick Step ✦ **At-Will**

Requirement: The kuo-toa must be bloodied.

Effect: The kuo-toa shifts 1 square.

Triggered Actions

↯ **Sticky Shield** ✦ **At-Will**

Trigger: An adjacent enemy misses the kuo-toa with a melee weapon attack.

Attack (Immediate Reaction): Melee 1 (the triggering enemy); +15 vs. Reflex

Hit: The weapon used for the triggering attack drops in the target's space.

Str 15 (+8)	**Dex** 16 (+9)	**Wis** 11 (+6)
Con 15 (+8)	**Int** 11 (+6)	**Cha** 13 (+7)

Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech

Equipment leather armor, slimy light shield, spear

damage from the debris, and is restrained at the bottom of the pit by the wreckage (save ends).

Once the front of the ship falls into the pit, the squares previously occupied by the ship are left open.

Seaweed: These plants are 40 feet tall and are difficult terrain. Creatures in the seaweed gain partial concealment.

2 Possessed Debris (T)	Level 14 Minion Hazard
Object	XP 250 each
Detect Perception DC 29	**Initiative** –
Immune attacks	

Triggered Actions

↯ **Swirling Debris** ✦ **At-Will**

Trigger: A character enters the hazard's space or starts his or her turn there.

Attack (Opportunity Action): Melee 1 (the triggering character); +17 vs. Fortitude

Hit: The target is dazed and slowed until the start of its next turn, or until the target moves 4 or more squares from the debris.

Countermeasures

✦ **Destroy:** Athletics or Religion DC 21 (standard action).

Requirement: The character performing the check must be adjacent to the hazard or in its space. *Success:* The hazard is destroyed. *Failure (16 or lower):* The hazard attacks the character as a free action.

Lore: If the characters explore the cabin area under the forecastle deck, they discover bits of broken furniture and some personal effects. Among these effects is a waterlogged book titled *Boatswain's Log*. This is Torgath's personal journal, and it describes his concerns about the captain's decisions, hinting at mutiny. The special ink in this log isn't smeared by water, but some of the pages have deteriorated. Provide player characters with a handful of clues based on information given in the "Mutiny" sidebar, but don't get too specific. Give the characters just enough information to entice them to further explore what happened on board the *Zephyr* before it went down.

Other Wreckage: From the forecastle, characters can see the dark silhouette of the *Zephyr*'s midsection (see Event 3).

Tactics: The kuo-toa marauders attack in pairs. They remain mobile and use *slick maneuver* and *quick step* to maneuver. All the kuo-toas try to draw enemies near the possessed debris. The harpooner can use *reeling harpoon* to do so.

INTERROGATING KUO-TOAS

All the kuo-toas in this adventure know everything that has been happening here for the past two months. Some of the weaker kuo-toas can be coerced into providing useful information; use the guidelines below to aid such roleplaying siutations. The characters must be able to understand Deep Speech to communicate with the kuo-toas. Torgath (see Event 4) speaks this language and can translate for the characters.

A dominated kuo-toa might divulge more information than it would normally; use your own discretion when imparting such information.

Kuo-Toa Guards and Marauders (DC 21 Bluff or Intimidate check): These kuo-toas reveal anything the adventurers might want to know about the situation. They believe Thalarkis is an aberrant god, and they know the general direction of the kuo-toa shrine.

Kuo-Toa Harpooners (DC 29 Bluff or Intimidate check): These kuo-toas reveal only enough to placate aggressive characters, including the name of their master (Kraal) and the fact that they are raiding for treasure and taking it to their shrine. These kuo-toas refuse to reveal the location of the kuo-toa shrine.

All Other Kuo-Toas: Other kuo-toas refuse to reveal anything of importance.

Possessed Debris: Thalarkis can animate any square of debris within 3 squares of the ship. Unless detected, a hazard makes its first attack with combat advantage.

Event 3: Main Deck

Combat Encounter Level 14 (5,300 XP)

Here, the adventurers come upon the midsection of the ship, where kuo-toa harpooners wait on the deck and cutters hide beneath.

Light: None.

Monsters: 2 kuo-toa cutters (C), 2 kuo-toa harpooners (H), 1 possessed boom (B), 1 possessed hatch (D).

When the characters approach, read:

The midsection of the Zephyr is here, one end of it rammed into a rocky outcropping. It looks mostly intact, with a single mast rising above its deck and a pair of yardarms that project from the mast twenty feet above the deck. Patches of seaweed lie about the end of the ship section opposite the outcropping.

If the characters approach with any light sources, the kuo-toas know the party is coming. Otherwise, the characters can attempt a DC 21 group Stealth check to approach stealthily and gain surprise. If the kuo-toas are unaware of the party, the characters might also hear them talking.

Perception DC 24: The character hears the kuo-toas chatting in Deep Speech on the deck. If the character understands Deep Speech, the kuo-toas are excited that they will meet their "god" soon.

Perception DC 29: The character hears muffled voices from below deck.

Seaweed: These plants are 40 feet tall and are difficult terrain. Creatures in the seaweed gain partial concealment.

The Hold: See Event 4. Kuo-toa monitors guarding Torgath in the ship's hold stay at their posts even if combat breaks out. However, if an adventurer ventures into the hold, the monitors attack the intruder.

Other Wreckage: From the ship's midsection, the characters can just barely discern the wreckage of the forecastle (see Event 2) and quarterdeck (see Event 5).

2 Kuo-Toa Cutters (C) — **Level 16 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (aquatic) — XP 1,400 each

HP 151; **Bloodied** 75 — **Initiative** +17
AC 30, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 27 — **Perception** +12
Speed 6, swim 6 — Darkvision

Traits

Aquatic
The cutter can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Standard Actions

Barbed Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 4d4 + 14 damage.

Crippling Strike (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature granting combat advantage to the cutter); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 2d4 + 4 damage, and the target is slowed and takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends both).

Move Actions

Slick Maneuver ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The cutter must be adjacent to an enemy.
Effect: The cutter shifts 3 squares to another square adjacent to the enemy.

Triggered Actions

Swift Strike ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy misses the cutter with a melee attack.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The cutter shifts 4 squares and uses *barbed dagger*.

Skills Acrobatics +20, Stealth +20
Str 21 (+13) **Dex** 24 (+15) **Wis** 19 (+12)
Con 15 (+10) **Int** 17 (+11) **Cha** 17 (+11)
Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Equipment dagger

Tactics: The kuo-toa harpooners stay near the mast, using *reeling harpoon* to draw their enemies closer to the boom and hatch traps. Once they have enemies on the deck, they use *slick maneuver* to shift away from the boom and hatch, but stay close enough to keep the characters near the traps.

The kuo-toa cutters use *crippling strike* to slow their enemies so that they can't easily escape the reach of the possessed debris.

2 Kuo-Toa Harpooners (H) — **Level 14 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (aquatic) — XP 1,000 each

HP 137; **Bloodied** 68 — **Initiative** +12
AC 30, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 24 — **Perception** +13
Speed 6, swim 6 — Darkvision

Traits

Aquatic
The kuo-toa can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Standard Actions

Harpoon (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 8 damage, and the kuo-toa grabs the target (escape DC 21). Until the grab ends, the target takes ongoing 5 damage, and the kuo-toa can't make attacks using this harpoon.

Reeling Harpoon (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 8 damage, and the kuo-toa makes a secondary attack against the target.
Secondary Attack: +17 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, and the kuo-toa pulls the target up to 3 squares.

Move Actions

Slick Maneuver ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The kuo-toa must be adjacent to an enemy.
Effect: The kuo-toa shifts up to 3 squares to another square adjacent to the enemy.

Triggered Actions

Sticky Shield ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An adjacent enemy misses the kuo-toa with a melee weapon attack.
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Melee 1 (the triggering enemy); +17 vs. Reflex
Hit: The weapon used for the triggering attack drops in the target's space.

Str 17 (+10) **Dex** 17 (+10) **Wis** 13 (+8)
Con 17 (+10) **Int** 13 (+8) **Cha** 15 (+9)
Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Equipment leather armor, slimy light shield, 4 harpoons

Thalarkis animates the boom and hatch to attack enemies within reach. Unless detected, the traps make their first attacks with combat advantage.

Possessed Boom: This trap is 20 feet above the deck. When it attacks, one end of the boom swings down, strikes, and then floats back up.

Possessed Hatch: The hinges on the possessed hatch rusted away long ago, uncoupling the hatch from the deck. Nevertheless, it stays in its square.

Possessed Boom (B) **Level 14 Minion Trap**
Object XP 250

Detect Perception or Religion DC 29 **Initiative** +12
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 28, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 26, **Will** –
Immune necrotic, poison, psychic, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage

Standard Actions

Slam ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 4 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 11 damage.

Countermeasures

✦ **Destroy:** Athletics, Religion, or Thievery DC 22 (standard action). *Requirement:* The character performing the check must be adjacent to the trap. *Success:* The trap is destroyed. *Failure (17 or lower):* The trap attacks the character as a free action.

Possessed Hatch (D) **Level 14 Minion Trap**
Object XP 250

Detect Perception or Religion DC 29 **Initiative** +12
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 28, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** –
Immune necrotic, poison, psychic, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage

Standard Actions

Slam ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 11 damage, and the target falls prone.

Countermeasures

✦ **Destroy:** Athletics, Religion, or Thievery DC 22 (standard action). *Requirement:* The character performing the check must be adjacent to the trap. *Success:* The trap is destroyed. *Failure (17 or lower):* The trap attacks the character as a free action.

Event 4: The Hold

Combat Encounter Level 10 (2,800 XP)

The characters enter the hold of the sunken ship. In the ship's brig, they find Torgath the boatswain.

Light: None.
Monsters: 2 kuo-toa monitors (M).
Other Creatures: Torgath.

When the characters enter the hold, read:
The hold creaks ominously as you discern a small iron-barred brig standing against one wall, a dead half-orc floating in the water within. The half-orc wears dark leather armor. Unkempt black hair swirls in the water around his head. His skin is pale, wrinkled, and broken from his time spent underwater. Two kuo-toas stand guard nearby.

Heal DC 18: The half-orc is too well preserved to have gone down with the *Zephyr.*

Perception DC 26: The character notices that the dead-seeming half-orc in the brig is actually eyeing them as they enter.

The monitors attack any intruders. When combat begins, Torgath regains full consciousness and offers advice, most of which amounts to "Kill them and free me. Please!"

Tactics: The monitors gang up on one character at a time, attempting to quickly reduce the number of foes they face.

Fearing Kraal's punishment if they abandon their posts, the monitors do not pursue intruders that flee the hold. However, for the same reason, they fight to the death.

Treasure: The kuo-toas have a set of rusty keys, one of which opens the brig cage door.

2 Kuo-Toa Monitors (M) **Level 16 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (aquatic) XP 1,400 each

HP 153; **Bloodied** 76 **Initiative** +15
AC 30, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 26 **Perception** +15
Speed 6, swim 6 Darkvision

Traits

Aquatic
The kuo-toa can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Standard Actions

Slam ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 3d10 + 8 damage.

Crossbow (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 8 damage.

Leap Kick ✦ At-Will
Effect: The kuo-toa shifts up to 2 squares and uses *slam.*

Lightning Fist (lightning) **✦ Encounter**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + 8 lightning damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Move Actions

Slick Maneuver ✦ At-Will
Requirement: The kuo-toa must be adjacent to an enemy.
Effect: The kuo-toa shifts up to 3 squares to another square adjacent to the enemy.

Skills Acrobatics +18, Dungeoneering +15
Str 19 (+12) **Dex** 20 (+13) **Wis** 15 (+10)
Con 17 (+11) **Int** 15 (+10) **Cha** 16 (+11)
Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Equipment leather armor, crossbow, 20 bolts

Torgath, the Boatswain

Torgath has been in the brig for decades. Having spent most of that time in a semiconscious state, which he calls "the Raven Queen's black dream," he doesn't know exactly how much time has passed since the ship sank. He has only the unpleasant sense that it has been a very long time.

Torgath, Half-Orc Revenant	**Level 14 Striker**
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	
HP 91; **Bloodied** 45; **Healing Surges** 8	**Initiative** +9
AC 29, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 25	**Perception** +6
Speed 6, swim 6	Low-light vision
Traits	
Striker's Edge	
Once per turn, when Torgath hits an enemy granting combat advantage to him, he can deal 2d6 extra damage to that enemy.	
Unnatural Vitality	
When Torgath drops to 0 hit points or fewer, he is dazed instead of unconscious while dying. If he fails a death saving throw while dying in this way, he falls unconscious.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ ⊘ **Harpoon** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 or Ranged 10 (one creature); +20 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 11 damage.	
⸸ **Haft Smash** (weapon) ✦ **Encounter**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d8 + 11 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
Move Actions	
Pressing Maneuver ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: Torgath shifts up to 3 squares, including through enemy spaces.	
Triggered Actions	
Wrathful Assault ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: Torgath hits an enemy with an attack.	
Effect (Free Action): The attack deals 1d8 extra damage.	
Dark Reaping (necrotic) ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: A creature within 5 squares of Torgath is reduced to 0 hit points.	
Effect (Free Action): One creature that Torgath hits with an attack before the end of his next turn takes 1d8 + 2 extra necrotic damage. If a creature takes this necrotic damage, Torgath regains 9 hit points.	
Skills Athletics +16, Intimidate +15	
Str 18 (+11) **Dex** 14 (+9) **Wis** 8 (+6)	
Con 14 (+9) **Int** 10 (+7) **Cha** 12 (+8)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Deep Speech	
Equipment leather armor, 3 harpoons	

Torgath drowned when the ship sank, but he wasn't allowed to pass on normally. The Raven Queen sent him back and left him in the brig in his dreamlike state. He knows true death can be had only when he has atoned for his crimes by releasing Rukos and purging the world of Thalarkis.

Torgath's state prevented him from succumbing to madness but did not prevent some level of awareness. In the "black dream," Torgath learned quite a bit from his captors, including how to speak Deep Speech. He spontaneously awakened from the dream state when he sensed he would be freed.

Seeing his chance at redemption, Torgath asks for help. He gladly offers to aid the characters and freely tells them his sad history as well as the following information:

- At least twenty kuo-toas are in and around the wreck of the *Zephyr*. Their leader is a priest named Kraal.
- Some of the kuo-toas are weak-willed and might succumb to interrogation.
- Captain Rukos haunts the stern portion of the ship. In the black dream, Torgath heard the Raven Queen whisper that the captain's soul is linked to Thalarkis and can only be freed upon the ghost kraken's death.
- Thalarkis inhabits all three ship sections. The ghost can be confronted and destroyed only if released from its prison.
- Rukos's cutlass, *Everdare*, is a necessary component for the ritual the kuo-toas plan to cast to free Thalarkis, and it is the only weapon that can destroy the ghost kraken once and for all.

If the characters free Torgath and he decides to tag along (at your discretion), he equips himself with a few harpoons left behind by fleeing kuo-toas or lying near their corpses.

If the players don't want or need Torgath's help, you can choose to have him manifest as a ghost with no ability to affect the world physically or to be harmed by worldly sources of damage. He can still accompany the party to provide information and moral support, as needed.

The characters gain the "Help Torgath Atone" quest (see page 3).

Event 5: Quarterdeck

Roleplaying Encounter

Captain Rukos abides here, doomed to haunt the ship that led his crewmates to their end.

Light: None.

When the characters approach, read:

Tall seaweed grows about the area, and three thermal vents break the sea floor nearby, each spewing forth a cloudy mixture of minerals and hot water that extends up toward the water's surface.

The rear portion of the sunken ship is mostly intact, but it's wedged between a pair of rocky outcroppings. A mast juts upward from the quarterdeck, a single yardarm still intact. On the deck, at the ship's wheel, the apparition of a sailor looks at you as you approach.

This encounter is intended as a roleplaying challenge. Rukos cannot harm the characters, and vice versa, but the captain has gone insane during the decades he has spent at the *Zephyr*'s wheel. Remorseful for leading his crew to their deaths, Rukos is suspicious at first, but he settles down if the characters call him by his name and say why they've come. If the characters have Torgath along, he aids them in calming Rukos by apologizing for the mutiny.

The characters must pry information out of Rukos. He goes off on tangents, so the characters must guide him back to the business at hand. Skill checks made to glean information from him should have moderate to hard DCs.

Captain Rukos can provide the following information. Comments in parentheses provide wording that Rukos uses in his insanity.

- Rukos led his crew to their doom, and he still grieves for them and the *Zephyr*. ("I killed them. Each! My mates and my ship, bless 'er. My heart dies over and over.")
- The kuo-toas took Rukos's sword, *Everdare*, to use in their shrine. ("My steely old friend, *Everdare*. Gone in fish hands. Tentacles arise from their prayerful lips and black hearts.")
- *Everdare* must be used to deal the killing blow to Thalarkis for the kraken to be destroyed once and for all. ("My steely friend. He can kill it! He must. To Hells and gone with it, forever!")
- Rukos knows that Torgath is nearby. ("The traitor! Still here . . . watching me like a raven on the mast. Waiting forever. A caged soul in the brig.")
- Rukos has observed the kuo-toas going to and from their shrine, and he can point the adventurers in the shrine's general direction. ("Fishy-men come and go. There! Taking coin and the dead. Always taking more there.")

When the characters have learned everything they can from the mad ghost, continue with Event 6.

Event 6: Raiders Return

Combat Encounter Level 15 (6,250 XP)

As the adventurers wrap up their dealings with Rukos, a kuo-toa raiding party attacks.

Light: None.

Monsters: 4 kuo-toa drowners (D), 5 kuo-toa guards (G), 2 possessed sails (T).

When the encounter starts, read:

The captain suddenly grows silent and peers out into the dark depths. He whispers, "They've returned."

While the characters talk with Rukos, a kuo-toa raiding party returns from the surface. Seeing the characters on the rear portion of the ship, they spread out and approach from all sides. The captain's warning prevents the raiders from gaining surprise.

Thermal Vents: A small fissure in the ocean floor opens in the central square of each vent, spewing hot, toxic water into an area 15 feet on a side, forming a cloud 40 feet high. Any creature that enters the cloud or starts its turn there takes 10 fire and poison damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

4 Kuo-Toa Drowners (D) — **Level 14 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (aquatic) — XP 1,000 each

HP 137; **Bloodied** 68 — **Initiative** +15
AC 30, **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 24 — **Perception** +8
Speed 6, swim 6 — Darkvision

Traits

Aquatic
The drowner can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Standard Actions

⨁ **Hook** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 9 damage.

Dredging Hook (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The drowner must be wielding a hook.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d8 + 9 damage, and the drowner slides the target 3 squares to a square adjacent to it.

Barbed Net (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +17 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage. The target takes 8 extra damage if it moves willingly before the start of the drowner's next turn.

Move Actions

Slick Maneuver ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The drowner must be adjacent to an enemy.
Effect: The drowner shifts 3 squares to another square adjacent to the enemy.

Str 19 (+11) **Dex** 23 (+13) **Wis** 13 (+8)
Con 17 (+10) **Int** 13 (+8) **Cha** 18 (+11)

Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Equipment hook, 4 barbed nets

5 Kuo-Toa Guards (G) — **Level 16 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (aquatic) — XP 350 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +13
AC 30, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 27 — **Perception** +12
Speed 6, swim 6 — Darkvision

Traits

Aquatic
The kuo-toa can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Standard Actions

⨁ **Spear** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 12 damage.

Move Actions

Slick Maneuver ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The kuo-toa must be adjacent to an enemy.
Effect: The kuo-toa shifts up to 3 squares to another square adjacent to the enemy.

Str 15 (+10) **Dex** 16 (+11) **Wis** 9 (+7)
Con 15 (+10) **Int** 11 (+8) **Cha** 13 (+9)

Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Equipment leather armor, light shield, spear

Tactics: The kuo-toa drowners pair off and attack the strongest-looking characters. They take advantage of the thermal vents, using *dredging hook* to slide foes into them. If they can get a foe in a thermal vent area, they shift back a square and use *barbed net* to punish characters who leave the vent areas.

In groups of two or three, the kuo-toa guards take on remaining enemies.

Thalarkis animates rotten sails, focusing on enemies who attack from range. Unless detected, the sails make their first attacks with combat advantage.

2 Possessed Sails (T)	Level 14 Minion Trap
Object	XP 250 each
Detect Perception or Religion DC 29	**Initiative** +12
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 28, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 26, **Will** –	
Immune necrotic, poison, psychic, all conditions, ongoing damage	
Standard Actions	
Entangling Canvas ✦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target is blinded and grabbed (save ends both). The sail can entangle one Large creature or up to two Medium or smaller creatures at a time.	
Move Actions	
Swimming Canvas ✦ At-Will	
Effect: The sail swims up to 6 squares, and creatures grabbed by it are pulled with it, staying in a space of the DM's choice within 1 square of the sail. The sail's movement provokes no opportunity attacks.	
Countermeasures	
✦ **Destroy:** Athletics or Religion DC 22 (standard action). *Requirement:* The character performing the check must be adjacent to the trap. *Success:* The trap is destroyed. *Failure (17 or lower):* The trap attacks the character as a free action.	

Event 7: Kuo-toa Shrine

Encounter Level 16 (7,300 XP)

The adventurers travel to the kuo-toa shrine, where Kraal has just begun the ritual to free Thalarkis.

Light: None.

Monsters: 1 kuo-toa whip (W), 2 kuo-toa monitors (M), 2 kuo-toa lashes (L), 2 kuo-toa guards (G).

When the characters approach, read:

A narrow passage leads to a flooded cavern with a 10-foot-high ceiling. The water is tinged red with blood and tastes of copper. In one corner is a dark, yawning chasm.

In the middle of the cavern clumps of humanoid bodies float, tied together with seaweed. A droning incantation emanates from within this mass of corpses. It looks like the corpses can be moved or possibly pulled apart to reveal what lurks beyond.

When the hidden shrine is revealed, read:

In the center of the cavern is a pile of chests, tools, weapons, bits of armor, pieces of coral, etched rocks, and other items. A single gleaming cutlass sits atop the pile, its blade buried in the mass.

The kuo-toa shrine is hidden in the middle of the mass of dead bodies. Within the shrine, Kraal is focused on his ritual, but the monitor next to him is vigilant. Only if the characters approach the cavern with no light can they gain surprise with a DC 22 group Stealth check.

Corpse Clumps: Each star on the map represents a clump of dead bodies bound together with seaweed. A clump extends from the floor to the ceiling 10 feet above. In their initial state, the bodies are essentially blocking terrain. (When the encounter begins, Kraal and the monitor next to him benefit from total cover against the characters due to this terrain.)

Moving a Clump: Any creature adjacent to a clump can use a minor action to slide that clump 1 square.

Kuo-Toa Whip (W)	Level 16 Controller
Medium natural humanoid (aquatic)	XP 1,400
HP 156; **Bloodied** 78	**Initiative** +12
AC 30, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 27	**Perception** +16
Speed 6, swim 6	Darkvision
Traits	
Aquatic	
The kuo-toa can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.	
Standard Actions	
Pincer Staff (weapon) **✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +21 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 9 damage, and the kuo-toa grabs the target (escape DC 22) until the end of the kuo-toa's next turn. Until the grab ends, the kuo-toa can't make attacks with its pincer staff. The kuo-toa can end the grab as a minor action and slide the target up to 3 squares. The target must remain within 2 squares of the kuo-toa during this slide.	
Sustain Standard: The grab persists until the end of the kuo-toa's next turn, and the target takes 2d8 + 9 damage.	
Lightning Strike (lightning) **✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +19 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d8 + 3 lightning damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the kuo-toa's next turn.	
Slime Vortex ✦ Encounter	
Attack: Area burst 2 within 20 (enemies in the burst); +19 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d10 + 7 damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends). The target falls prone, and the kuo-toa slides it up to 3 squares.	
Miss: Half damage, and the kuo-toa can slide the target 1 square.	
Move Actions	
Slick Maneuver ✦ At-Will	
Requirement: The kuo-toa must be adjacent to an enemy.	
Effect: The kuo-toa shifts up to 3 squares to another square adjacent to the enemy.	
Skills Dungeoneering +16, Religion +15	
Str 17 (+11) **Dex** 18 (+12) **Wis** 17 (+11)	
Con 20 (+13) **Int** 15 (+10) **Cha** 18 (+12)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech	
Equipment coat, pincer staff, headdress	

2 Kuo-Toa Monitors (M) **Level 16 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (aquatic) XP 1,400 each

HP 153; **Bloodied** 76 **Initiative** +15
AC 30, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 26 **Perception** +15
Speed 6, swim 6 Darkvision

Traits

Aquatic
The kuo-toa can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Slam** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 3d10 + 8 damage.

⊕ **Crossbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 15 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 8 damage.

Leap Kick ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The kuo-toa shifts up to 2 squares and uses *slam*.

Lightning Fist (lightning) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + 8 lightning damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Move Actions

Slick Maneuver ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The kuo-toa must be adjacent to an enemy.
Effect: The kuo-toa shifts up to 3 squares to another square adjacent to the enemy.

Skills Acrobatics +18, Dungeoneering +15
Str 19 (+12) **Dex** 20 (+13) **Wis** 15 (+10)
Con 17 (+11) **Int** 15 (+10) **Cha** 16 (+11)
Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Equipment leather armor, crossbow, 20 bolts

2 Kuo-Toa Lashes (L) **Level 15 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid (aquatic) XP 1,200 each

HP 115; **Bloodied** 57 **Initiative** +12
AC 27, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 26 **Perception** +10
Speed 6, swim 6 Darkvision

Traits

Aquatic
The lash can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Trident** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 9 damage.

⊕ **Lightning Trident** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 3/6 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 10 lightning damage.
Effect: The trident returns to the lash.

Fill Lungs ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +20 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 7 damage, and the target is slowed and takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends both).

Forked Lightning (lightning) ✦ **Recharge** when the lash bloodies an enemy or reduces an enemy to 0 hit points or fewer
Attack: Area burst 2 within 10 (one, two, or three creatures in burst); +20 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 6 lightning damage, and the target is blinded until the start of the lash's next turn.

Move Actions

Slick Maneuver ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The lash must be adjacent to an enemy.
Effect: The lash shifts 3 squares to another square adjacent to the enemy.

Skills Dungeoneering +15, Religion +14
Str 23 (+13) **Dex** 20 (+12) **Wis** 17 (+10)
Con 19 (+11) **Int** 15 (+9) **Cha** 18 (+11)
Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Equipment trident, ceremonial knife

2 Kuo-Toa Guards (G) **Level 16 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (aquatic) XP 350 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +13
AC 30, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 27 **Perception** +12
Speed 6, swim 6 Darkvision

Traits

Aquatic
The kuo-toa can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Spear** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 12 damage.

Move Actions

Slick Maneuver ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The kuo-toa must be adjacent to an enemy.
Effect: The kuo-toa shifts up to 3 squares to another square adjacent to the enemy.

Str 15 (+10) **Dex** 16 (+11) **Wis** 9 (+7)
Con 15 (+10) **Int** 11 (+8) **Cha** 13 (+9)
Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech
Equipment leather armor, light shield, spear

A clump cannot slide through an occupied square or into the shrine's squares.

A creature adjacent to a clump can, as part of its own movement, grasp and move the clump. A creature moves at half speed while moving a clump in this way.

Destroying a Clump: Each clump has AC/Reflex 5; Fortitude 10; immune to necrotic, poison, psychic, all conditions, and ongoing damage; hp 45. If a clump is in the burst or blast of a fire, force, or thunder attack power, make a saving throw for the clump. Failure results in the clump's destruction.

Everdare: When the shrine is revealed, *Everdare* reaches out telepathically to the nearest character, saying, "Danger is afoot. Free me, friend, and we shall always be victorious. This I promise."

If a character pulls *Everdare* from the shrine, he or she is infused with a sense of invulnerability and immediately knows all of the sword's capabilities. The character also feels *Everdare*'s pent-up desire for adventure and battle—the sword has been waiting a long time for a good fight.

Tactics: When combat begins, Kraal and the monitor next to him push bodies out of the way, the monitor moving to intercept the characters and the whip moving to get away from melee combat. A second kuo-toa monitor and two kuo-toa guards come up from the pit to intercept the adventurers. The kuo-toa lashes emerge from the ancillary chamber on the far end of the main cavern at the start of the second round of combat.

Kraal stays out of melee, preferring that his followers do the dirty work. He uses *lightning strike* to blind enemies whenever possible and uses *slime vortex* as soon as he can get two or three enemies in its area of effect.

The lashes focus their attacks on wounded enemies so that they can recharge *forked lightning* easily. If enemies advance toward them, they use *fill lungs* to slow their pursuers.

The kuo-toa guards stay near Kraal to help keep their master safe.

Conclusion

As the characters rest after the battle, *Everdare* is vehement about the need to summon and slay Thalarkis.

The sword tells the adventurers that they can free the ghost kraken by finishing Kraal's ritual. Torgath strongly supports the sword's point of view. Anywhere near the *Zephyr*'s wreckage is an acceptable site, and *Everdare* can guide the party in the specifics of the ritual.

Once the characters have chosen where and when to summon Thalarkis, go to Event 8.

Treasure: *Everdare*, one chest containing 5,000 gp, one chest containing 4,000 gp, a platinum ring set with three white pearls (1,500 gp), ten pieces of pink coral (100 gp each), five pieces of blue coral (500 gp each), two pieces of black coral (1,000 gp each), two common and two uncommon magic items (level 14 + 1d4), and rocks etched with blasphemous prayers to Thalarkis in Deep Speech (worthless except as curiosities).

Quest Completion: Among the many corpses are five of Ardrin's unfortunate friends. Returning them to Dorgal's Cove completes a minor quest (page 3).

Everdare

Everdare is a legendary cutlass that has graced the hands of many daring adventurers over the centuries. When *Everdare* was first created, it was just a magic cutlass. Since then, it has taken on additional properties and powers based on the people who have wielded it. The cutlass's personality is an amalgamation of the personalities of its previous owners, many of whom were intrepid seafarers. It named itself *Everdare* due to its proclivity for enticing its owners to undertake great risks. Though it hesitates to say so, it has led several of its previous owners to early graves.

The cutlass is empathic and telepathic. It can sense its owner's emotional state and transmit its own (usually excitement). Occasionally, it communicates with its owner, cajoling him or her to act bravely or foolishly.

Everdare's Goals

Everdare wants to:

- ✦ Be wielded by people of unflagging bravery and daring, never resting when adventure calls.
- ✦ Undertake dangerous quests to satisfy its addiction to danger and combat.
- ✦ Weave its story of legendary wielders known for their courage and their glorious deaths.

Everdare Level 17 Rare

This cutlass is crafted of starmetal, ebony, and unicorn horn. The blade is as reflective as the finest mirror, and the cutlass subtly vibrates whenever it is held.

Weapon: Short sword
Enhancement Bonus: +4 to attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +4d6 damage
Properties
- ✦ While this weapon is on your person, you are immune to fear.
- ✦ You gain a +2 item bonus to Athletics and Acrobatics checks, as well as saving throws against slowing, immobilizing, and restraining effects.

Utility Power (Healing) ✦ **Encounter** (Move Action)
Effect: You shift up to your speed. The next melee attack you make with this weapon on this turn deals 4d6 extra damage, and you regain hit points equal to the total amount of extra damage dealt.

Event 8: Thalarkis

Encounter Level 16 (7,000 XP)

The characters finally take on the ghost kraken.

Light: None.
Monsters: Thalarkis (ghost kraken).

This encounter takes place at wherever the characters have chosen to summon Thalarkis. The characters begin this event by performing the rest of Kraal's ritual under *Everdare*'s supervision. At the rite's end, Thalarkis's spectral form appears and attacks.

When Thalarkis appears, read:
The insubstantial form of a kraken coalesces from the tripartite wreck of the Zephyr. It is enormous and wispy-white, with soulless eyes and long, spectral tentacles. With a telepathic bellow, it calls forth four ghostly shapes that squirm in the water like disembodied tentacles.

Ghost Kraken **Level 16 Solo Controller**
Huge aberrant magical beast (undead) XP 7,000
HP 640; **Bloodied** 320 **Initiative** +13
AC 30, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 27 **Perception** +16
Speed 6, swim 10; phasing Darkvision
Immune disease, necrotic, poison
Saving Throws +5; **Action Points** 2

Traits

Action Recovery
Whenever the kraken starts its turn, any dazing, stunning, or dominating effect on it ends.

Aquatic
In aquatic combat, the kraken gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Crushing Grasp
When the kraken starts its turn, each creature grabbed by it or a ghost tentacle within 10 squares of the kraken takes 10 damage.

Ghost Tentacles
Whenever the kraken starts its turn with fewer than four ghost tentacles within 20 squares of it, a number of tentacles appear so that the number of tentacles within 20 squares of it equals four. The tentacles roll initiative when they appear, acting on their own turns.

Insubstantial
The kraken takes half damage from any damage source, except those that deal force, psychic, or radiant damage. When the kraken takes force, psychic, or radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.

Threatening Reach
The kraken can make opportunity attacks against enemies within 3 squares of it.

Standard Actions

Tentacle ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +19 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d8 + 11 damage, and the kraken grabs the target (escape DC 22). The kraken can grab up to eight creatures at a time.

Fling ✦ At-Will
Effect: Melee 3 (one creature grabbed by the kraken) or close burst 10 (one creature grabbed by a ghost tentacle in the burst); the kraken slides the target up to 5 squares and makes the following attack against the target. If the target would enter another creature's space, the kraken can also make the following attack against that creature.
Attack: +19 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 11 damage, and the target falls prone.

Coils of Doom ✦ At-Will
Effect: The kraken uses *tentacle* or *fling*, in any combination, to make up to three attacks.

Insanity Wave (psychic) **✦ Recharge** when first bloodied
Special: This attack's origin square can be adjacent to any ghost tentacle within 10 squares of the kraken.
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +19 vs. Will
Hit: 4d10 + 13 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.

Minor Actions

Burst of Madness (psychic) **✦ At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: Close burst 10 (one ghost tentacle in the burst); the kraken slides the target up to 5 squares, and the target drops to 0 hit points. The kraken then makes the following attack, centered on the target.
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +19 vs. Will
Hit: 1d10 + 13 psychic damage.

Triggered Actions

Ghostly Escape (teleportation) **✦ Encounter**
Trigger: The kraken is first bloodied.
Effect (Free Action): The kraken teleports up to 10 squares, and creatures grabbed by it are pulled with it, staying in a space of the kraken's choice within 3 squares of it.

Skills Intimidate +18, Stealth +18
Str 18 (+12) **Dex** 21 (+13) **Wis** 16 (+11)
Con 24 (+15) **Int** 18 (+12) **Cha** 21 (+13)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** telepathy 20

Tactics: Thalarkis avoids close combat by using *tentacle* to keep grabbed enemies 2 or 3 squares away. With *ghost tentacles*, it creates minions adjacent to ranged attackers, following up with melee attacks through such minions. Thalarkis employs its melee attacks to force enemies into clusters good for *wave of insanity* or *burst of madness*.

The ghost kraken has spent decades trapped in the *Zephyr*'s wreckage. It understands the hazards located near the wreckage and uses them to its advantage. For instance, if Thalarkis is summoned at the front of the ship, he flings characters toward the front and then makes a Strength check to push the ship over into the precipice (see Event 2). If the battle unfolds near the quarterdeck, Thalarkis might fling foes into the thermal vents.

Killing Thalarkis

Thalarkis can be killed only with *Everdare*, which ignores but does not shut off the ghost kraken's *insubstantial* trait. If Thalarkis drops to 0 or fewer hit points from a damage source other than *Everdare*, all effects on Thalarkis end and its form becomes like mist that clouds the water. While Thalarkis is at 0 or fewer hit

4 Ghost Tentacles **Level 16 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium aberrant animate (aquatic, blind, undead) XP –
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +14
AC 30, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 26 **Perception** +6
Speed 6, swim 6; phasing Blindsight 5
Immune blinded, disease, gaze, illusion, necrotic, poison

Traits

Aquatic
In aquatic combat, the tentacle gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Standard Actions

Slam ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 12 damage, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 22). While grabbing a creature, the tentacle can use *slam* only against that creature.

Move Actions

Insubstantial Slithering ✦ At-Will
Effect: The tentacle shifts up to 3 squares.

Str 10 (+8) **Dex** 18 (+12) **Wis** 7 (+6)
Con 15 (+10) **Int** 6 (+6) **Cha** 16 (+11)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** –

points, it is helpless and still vulnerable to attack, so a successful blow from *Everdare* slays it. At the start of its next turn, if still at 0 or fewer hit points but alive, Thalarkis revives in the same space or nearest unoccupied one. It regains 55 hit points and begins fighting anew.

Conclusion

Once Thalarkis is defeated, Captain Rukos's spirit finds the characters and thanks them for their aid. With his mind freed of its madness and both his crew and ship avenged, Rukos is ready to pass on. Before he dissipates, Rukos whispers to the character wielding *Everdare*, "Beware that fool cutlass, friend. Or, at least, find a better end than the one it led me to."

Before the captain leaves, Torgath expresses remorse for his mutiny, and Rukos forgives him. Torgath then passes away as well, unless you prefer to keep him on as a recurring NPC. Before Torgath follows Rukos into death, he looks to the party and says, "My new friends, I can never repay you for your deeds here. Thank . . ." He then falls silent, and his corpse floats away (if a revenant). or he simply fades away (if a ghost).

Ending the Adventure

If all ends well, the characters return to Dorgal's Cove and bring peace of mind to its beleaguered populace. If the characters return the bodies of any of the dead villagers to Dorgal's Cove, the party earns even greater respect. Word of the group's success spreads quickly, and the remaining villagers turn out for a feast in the party's honor. At the feast, Lady Theryn proclaims the characters "Heroes of Dorgal's Cove," stating they'll always have a home in the village.

If Torgath is still with the group, he joins the celebration and concludes that the Raven Queen must have reasons for keeping him alive. What those reasons are, he doesn't yet know.

When the adventurers leave Dorgal's Cove, they hear a villager singing a song proclaiming their bravery. Their story becomes the happy ending of the legend of Captain Rukos and the kraken, Thalarkis.

About the Author

Craig Campbell is an architect by day and a D&D player, DM, and freelancer by night. He enjoys sticking it to the "architecture-man" by designing dungeons without stairwell guardrails or proper lighting control systems. He is a regular contributor to *Dungeon* and *Dragon*; his previous offering was "Baba Yaga's Dancing Hut" in *Dungeon* 197.

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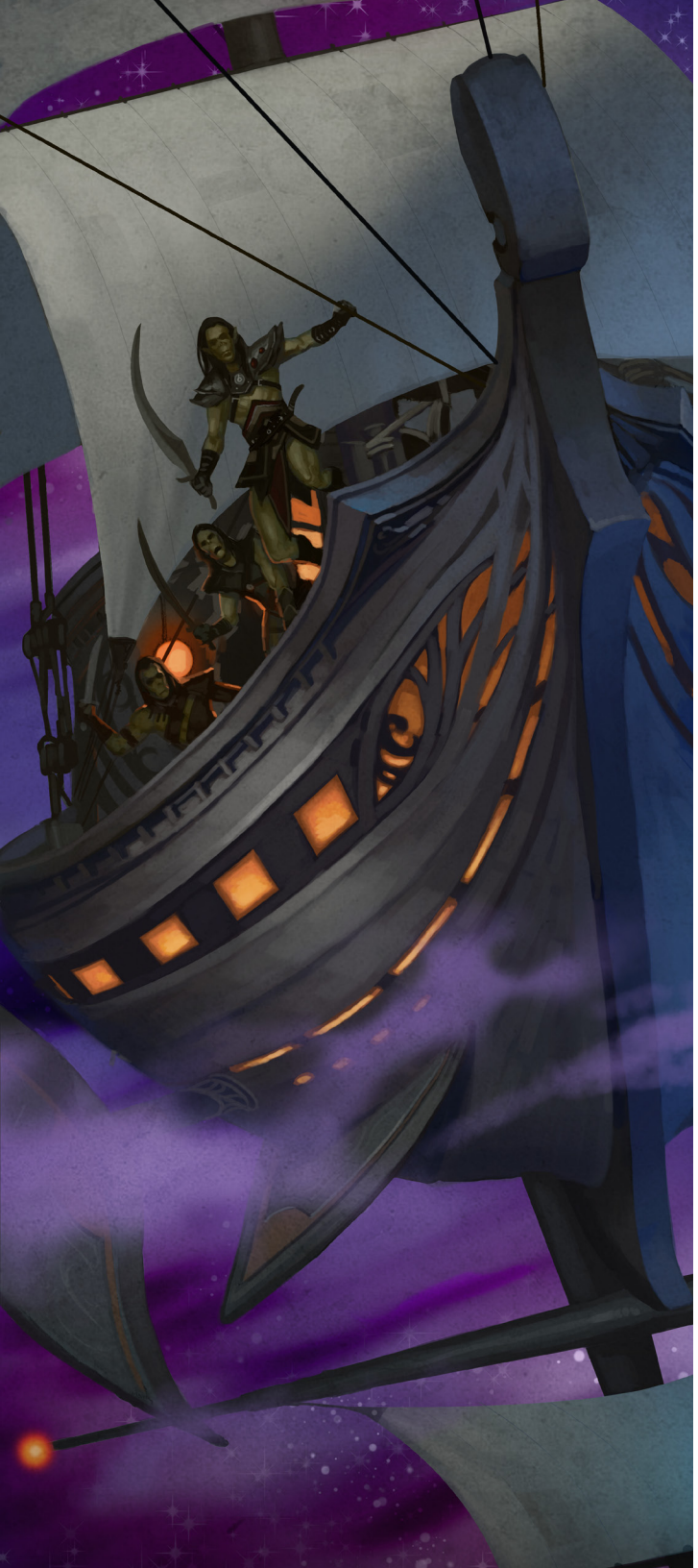

Hunt for the Heretic

A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 14–16

By Sterling Hershey

Illustration by Mark Winters

Cartography by Jason A. Engle

"Hunt for the Heretic" is a Dungeons & Dragons® adventure for 14th- to 16th-level adventurers traveling in the Astral Sea. A mysterious vessel is raiding, plundering, and destroying isolated settlements and astral ships. The heroes must brave the bizarre and dangerous environment to hunt down the vessel.

Heroes undertaking this adventure should have a basic familiarity with ship-based modes of travel. The Dungeon Master will find *The Plane Above: Secrets of the Astral Sea*™ a useful aid in running this adventure, particularly for ship combat. Other helpful resources include the "Aerial Battles" article in *Dungeon* 180, *Adventurer's Vault*™, and *Manual of the Planes*™.

Background

Several months ago, a githyanki pirate captain named Bowanru captured an *astral clipper* named the *Etherean Clipper*. During the boarding action, Bowanru's vessel, the *Windstriker*, was disabled. Despite the damage they took to their vessel, the masterful pirates overwhelmed their prey. They soon discovered the source of the ship's powerful defenses: a rare *focusing astral helm* that was installed on the vessel. The magic device boosted the ship's power and enabled the pilot to channel powers through the item. Bowanru abandoned the useless hulk of the *Windstriker* and repaired his newly captured ship.

As a dedicated Far Wanderer (see page 143 of *The Plane Above: Secrets of the Astral Sea*), Bowanru considered himself a true githyanki, committed to merciless conquests and raids. He loathed how other githyanki pirates allowed targets to survive so that they would eventually be renewed and ripe for future raids. Bowanru believed that the path to githyanki security was the accumulation of power and the will to use it to eliminate others. He destroys the vessels he raids, making him a danger to all travelers in the Astral Sea.

Bowanru rechristened the captured clipper the *Etherean Heretic*. His crew is fanatically loyal to him and enjoys the spoils of their raids. They have even learned a bit of his arcane power. Bowanru channels his personal abilities through the *Heretic's focusing astral helm* to shield the ship from view and launch devastating attacks against his enemies.

For the past few months, Bowanru has targeted an area known as the Shattered Isle. Its name came about when, late in the Dawn War, a great battle raged across a flat, rocky mote called the Tarka Sheet. Magical forces expended during the fight struck the Sheet's fault lines, and the Sheet shattered into hundreds of fragments, which doomed the forces fighting atop it.

Though the Shattered Isle is a remote location, it attracts treasure hunters, pirates, and more. When

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Bowanru arrived there, he discovered that the expansion efforts of the settlement of Driftrock are drawing commerce and trading vessels to the area. These ships have become Bowanru's favorite targets, prompting Driftrock to upgrade its fortifications.

Thanks to the *Etherean Heretic's* stealth and its unusual attack methods, debate abounds among the local population as to exactly what haunts the area.

Adventure Synopsis

The player characters arrive in Crumbletown, a settlement on an outlying fragment of the Shattered Isle, by using a teleportation circle. At the moment of their arrival, Bowanru is attacking the settlement. The githyanki pirate correctly believes that Crumbletown is using a portal to Sigil to bring in allies and weapons to attack him, and he knows that Crumbletown's Lord Mayor Hale has a *folding astral clipper* worth stealing.

The characters appear in a barricaded room while the *Etherean Heretic*'s raid is in progress. The attackers are in the adjacent room, stealing the town's key to the Sigil portal. Hale enlists the party's help to stop the attacks and recover the key. To help them, he loans the party *Mistrunner*, his *folding astral clipper*.

The adventurers can question local sailors and merchants about the attacks, picking up rumors and speculation. If they do so, they can learn that the Shattered Isle is the center of the activity. Their hunt begins an extended skill challenge with numerous scenes that can reveal clues about the quarry.

Depending on the characters' actions, the *Etherean Heretic* might target them directly. Alternatively, the adventurers could set a trap for the vessel.

When engaged, the *Etherean Heretic* is a formidable foe. Ultimately, boarding action decides the fate of the *Heretic* and the *Mistrunner*.

Adventure Hooks

Below are a few ways to involve the party in this story.

Official Invitation: The adventurers are invited by the lord mayor of Crumbletown or Master Emerald of Driftrock to investigate the mysterious attacks. This hook assumes that the characters have some knowledge and experience in the Astral Sea, abilities likely to produce results, or personal ties to the officials involved.

Third-Party Invitation: A merchant or friendly local invites the adventurers to investigate the attacks. This hook works especially well if the employer owns ships or settlements that have been attacked. You can adapt the negotiations of event 2 by changing the central character from the lord mayor to the employer.

Exploring the Astral Sea: The adventurers are drawn into the adventure when visiting Crumbletown and exploring the Astral Sea. They become involved when their vessel arrives in the midst of an *Etherean Heretic* raid (see the "Alternative Arrival" sidebar).

Quests

Stop the Attacks

15th-level Major Quest (1,200 XP/character)
The adventurers must locate the *Etherean Heretic* and put an end to Bowanru's raids by destroying or capturing the ship and its crew.

Return the Loot and *Mistrunner*

15th-level Major Quest (1,200 XP/character)
The adventurers must return half the treasure aboard the *Etherean Heretic* to Driftrock and Crumbletown, and they must return the *Mistrunner* to Lord Mayor Hale. If they return only the *Mistrunner*, they instead gain half this quest's XP reward.

Return Crumbletown's Portal Key

15th-level Minor Quest (300 XP/character)
The adventurers must locate the portal key to Sigil and return it to Crumbletown.

Event 1: Arrival

Combat Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

The adventurers arrive in Crumbletown by using a teleportation circle.

Light: Bright magical globes on the walls.
Monsters: 5 githyanki raiders.
Other Creatures: Lord Mayor Hale, 2 guards.

When the characters appear, read:
As the magical energy from the teleportation circle dissipates, you hear someone yell, "Hold the door! Keep them out!" Nearby, two armor-clad humans use their bodies to hold a large wooden door closed.

A human male, the person you just heard, turns to you. His left arm is injured, and he wears the fine trappings of a government official. "Help! We're under attack! They've already gained the portal room through that door. If they damage the portal, we'll be cut off from Sigil. Please help!"

Tactical Placement

The tactical location of the monsters in the encounters can vary based on the characters' actions and prior events. Place the monsters as you see fit.

Perception DC 22: The adventurer hears footsteps retreating from the door, fading as someone runs through the room beyond and down a corridor.

The adventurers arrive in the teleportation chamber, a small room made of rock with a crumbling surface, in the Hall of Travel. The humans are Lord Mayor Hale of Crumbletown and members of the town guard. If the adventurers hesitate, the attackers stop trying to force their way in, leaving the guards uncertain what to expect next.

When the party enters the portal room, read:
The portal room is vacant. Stone walls with a crumbling surface intersect with a natural stone alcove that holds the portal to Sigil. A short stone pedestal stands in front of the alcove. Gouges and scrapes around a depression in the top of the pedestal indicate that something was forcibly removed from it. A dozen small ruby fragments lie scattered around the pedestal.

Damaged double doors hang off their hinges between this chamber and an antechamber beyond them. You can hear the rapid retreat of several people beyond that doorway.

The portal is inactive and cannot be used unless the key is returned to the depression on the pedestal (see event 2 for details).

When the party pursues, read:
The antechamber has an exit door to the north and a stairway leading down to the south. The door is swinging closed after being opened forcibly. Beyond, the corridor is a winding cavern tunnel with flights of natural steps. In it, a black fog slowly recedes from the antechamber.

The fog is the lingering effect of the *Etherean Heretic* crew's *astral fog*. The githyanki raiders have the following power.

Minor Actions
Astral Fog (aura) ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: The githyanki activates an aura 1 that lasts until the end of its next turn. The aura is lightly obscured to enemies, unless it overlaps another *astral fog* aura. Such an area of overlapping *astral fog* auras is heavily obscured.

If the characters pursue without delay, they can see their quarry in the corridor.

When the characters see their quarry, read:
Dark fog obscures the fleeing figures, which are humanoids dressed in dark armor and masks. They carry longswords.

Tactics: The githyanki focus on escaping without stopping or revealing themselves. If forced into combat, they fight on the run. They'd rather die than be captured, so they take great risks. The raiders fly from the balcony up to the *Etherean Heretic* while taking turns using *astral fog*. (Creatures can fly in the Astral Sea when not subject to gravity. See *Manual of the Planes*, page 86.)

When the raiders fly up to their ship, read:
The corridor opens onto an exterior balcony at the edge of the Crumbletown fragment. An enormous black cloud billows overhead, and the fleeing humanoids rise up into it.

Perception DC 31: The adventurer catches a glimpse of the stern of an *astral clipper* through the fog that envelops the craft. The larger cloud dissipates in a matter of seconds, leaving no trace of the ship.

Lore: Bowanru is using his *astral fog* power through the *focusing astral helm* to conceal the *Etherean Heretic*. He then uses the helm's power of *invisibility* to make it seem like the fog fades to nothing. When the ship is invisible, it sails away quickly.

Treasure: Even if the party defeats all the raiders, Bowanru gains the portal key. A raider wears one of a pair of *pouches of shared acquisition* (see the next page). Bowanru has the other pouch, and he has already taken the key out of it. If the characters get the raider's pouch, Bowanru doesn't use his during this adventure for fear that the adventurers can use it to track him. He keeps his pouch, hoping to recover the other one eventually.

5 Githyanki Raiders **Level 13 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid XP 800 each

HP 126; **Bloodied** 63 **Initiative** +11
AC 27, **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 27 **Perception** +9
Speed 6

Traits
Combat Advantage (psychic)
The githyanki deals 2d8 extra psychic damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Standard Actions
⊕ **Silver Longsword** (psychic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +18 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 12 psychic damage.

⸸ **Raider's Strike** (psychic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +18 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 12 psychic damage.
Effect: The githyanki shifts up to 2 squares.

⸸ **Slash and Dash** (psychic, weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Melee 1 (one or two creatures); +18 vs. AC. The githyanki can shift up to its speed before making the second attack.
Hit: 4d8 + 14 psychic damage.
Miss: Half damage.

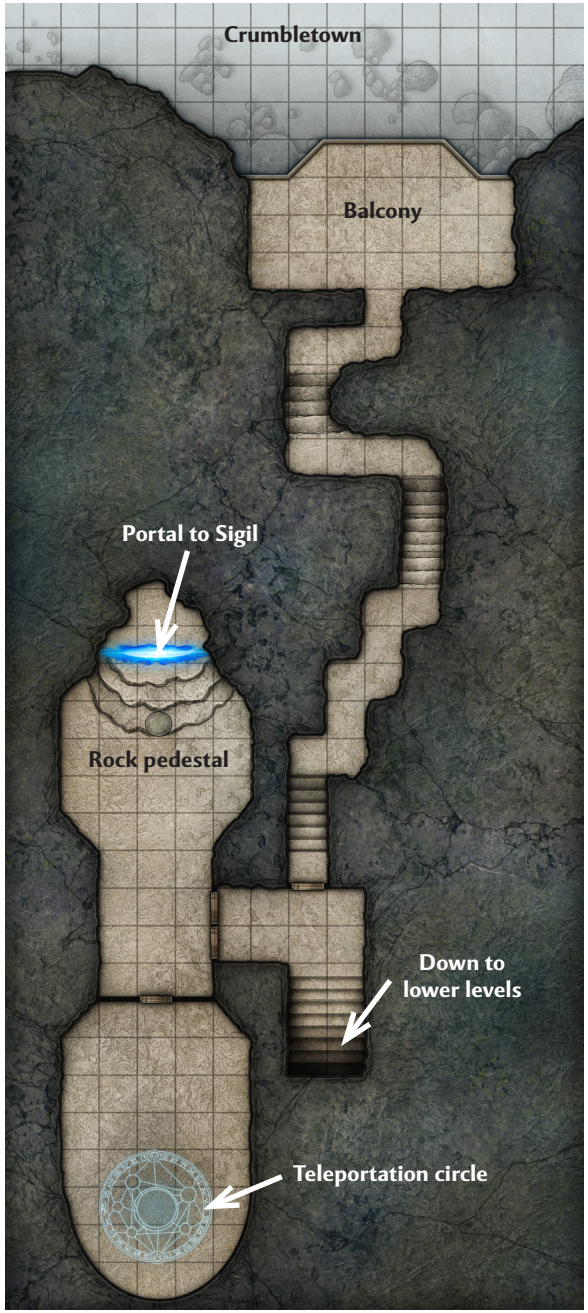
Move Actions
Raider's Step ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The githyanki shifts up to 2 squares.

Telekinetic Leap ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: The githyanki flies up to 5 squares, or one ally within 10 squares of it can fly up to 5 squares as a free action.

Skills History +7, Insight +14

Str 22 (+12)	**Dex** 17 (+9)	**Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 14 (+8)	**Int** 9 (+5)	**Cha** 8 (+5)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Equipment leather armor, silver longsword



Pouches of Shared Acquisition Level 15 Common

These matched leather pouches allow you to move items between them.

Wondrous Item 25,000 gp

Property

These two matched leather pouches magically share the same interior space. Whatever is placed in one pouch (to a maximum weight of 3 pounds) can be accessed from the other pouch regardless of the distance between them, as long as both pouches are on the same plane. If the pouches are on different planes, neither pouch can access the interior space. Only one pouch can be accessed at a time.

Event 2: Proper Welcome

Roleplaying Encounter

After the *Etherean Heretic* escapes, Lord Mayor Hale requests the adventurers' attendance in the portal room of the Hall of Travel. He is shaken, and his desperation and fear is apparent. Hale is recovering from his injury, having received some magical healing.

When the mayor speaks, read:

"Thank you for coming. For months now, a mysterious force has terrorized the Shattered Isle from here to Driftrock. It attacks ships, travelers, and now dares to strike Crumbletown. It disrupts our local travel and commerce. Today, it damaged all the vessels in the harbor and made off with our Sigil portal key!

"Up until now, I believed the rumors that some kind of monster was responsible. Perhaps that is still true, but if so, it has some capable minions. It could be as some fear—that an ancient evil has been released from the battlefields of the Dawn War. Maybe it is something from the battle rumored to be responsible for creating the Shattered Isle itself. Whatever it is, it must be stopped.

"I need your help."

ALTERNATIVE ARRIVAL

Event 1 assumes that the characters arrive by using a teleportation circle. Below are suggestions for other starting circumstances.

Astral Vessel: If the adventurers arrive on an astral vessel, they see a gray-black fog over a prominent, stylized stone building built into a bluff on the Crumbletown fragment. A searing ray of fire erupts from the fog toward the characters' craft if they venture close. They might glimpse the stern of an *astral skiff* disappearing into the fog. They also see several *astral skiffs* and *astral clippers* in flames, floating at their moorings in the harbor below.

If the *Etherean Heretic* attacks the adventurers' vessel, use the opening of event 5. Assuming the characters survive the attack, they can find help in Crumbletown to repair their vessel. After they dock, the lord mayor requests their presence. See event 2.

Sigil: If the adventurers arrive through the Sigil portal, they are the last to do so until the portal is repaired. They appear just as one masked githyanki attacker flees through the antechamber door with the portal key, and two others bang on the door to the teleportation room. Upon the characters' arrival, the raiders use *astral fog* and flee.

If the adventurers have any known desires, weaknesses, or personal reasons to help, the lord mayor uses them to his advantage. He offers the party 100 pp, plus free access to the teleportation circle and the Sigil portal (after it is repaired).

Folding Astral Clipper Level 18 Uncommon

This small metallic cube expands into an astral clipper.

Wondrous Item 85,000 gp

Utility Power ✦ Daily (Standard Action)

Effect: The cube unfolds into a full-sized *astral clipper*. The cube unfolds only if there is enough unoccupied space to contain the clipper.

Utility Power ✦ At-Will (Standard Action)

Effect: The *folding astral clipper* collapses into a cube. You cannot use this power while creatures or objects (not including objects normally contained in the clipper) occupy the *astral clipper*.

If the party agrees to help, read:

The lord mayor is relieved and grateful. "Our foe is some kind of raider. I can't fully discount the other claims, but today's attack adds credence to rumors of pirates. Still, the Astral Sea is a wild and strange place, so we must keep our minds open."

The lord mayor pulls a small cube from his jacket pocket. "Now, I think you'll find this helpful. It's a rare item. This is a folding astral clipper, *and as such, I kept it safe in the attack. I call her the* Mistrunner, *and I will lend her to you for this mission.*

"You'll need a crew, of course. I've arranged for you to meet Plankof, first mate of the astral clipper Silversky. *He has agreed to round up a crew willing to put a stop to this menace. With all the ships damaged in the attack, I'm sure there will be plenty of sailors eager for a little payback. You can meet Plankof down at the docks."*

If the adventurers prefer to use their own astral transport, Hale is happy to allow them to do so.

Continue with the following:

"I want you to end this menace and retrieve our lost portal key. You see, the object that must be carried through the portal for travel is a simple ruby shard. The shard must be drawn from a magic chalice holding dozens of such shards. The chalice, which we call our key, usually rests on the pedestal in front of the portal.

Astral Clipper
Gargantuan vehicle

HP 350 **Space** 4 squares by 10 squares **Cost** 21,000 gp
AC 3; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 2
Speed fly 14 (hover)

Pilot
The pilot must stand at the control wheel, typically at the rear of the *astral clipper*.

Crew
In addition to the pilot, an *astral clipper* requires a crew of four, all of whom use a standard action each round to control the clipper. Reduce the clipper's fly speed by 4 squares for each missing crew member. At fly speed 0, an *astral clipper* sails out of control.

Load
Twenty-five Medium creatures; thirty tons of cargo.

Out of Control
An out-of-control *astral clipper* moves forward at half speed, not including any modifiers for its astral sails.

Sails
An *astral clipper* takes a penalty or bonus to its fly speed from -4 to +4, depending on the strength and direction of the astral wind.

Astral Attunement
An *astral clipper* functions only in the Astral Sea.

Fragile Propulsion
For every 100 damage an *astral clipper* takes, its speed is reduced by 2. At fly speed 0, the ship comes to a stop.

"Without the chalice, I'm afraid that we're cut off indefinitely from Sigil. If we're forced to recreate the key, the portal will be closed too long for our comfort. But the key is useless without the portal. I don't know why a raider would want it. Even if you find it broken, bring it back. We might be able to repair it."

The adventurers are free to get the hunt under way.

Event 3: The Docks

Roleplaying Encounter

When the characters head to the docks, read:

A long, gravel slope leads from the Hall of Travel to the town proper and the docks, which are heavy platforms extending from rocky outcroppings.

You easily find the Silversky, *which is severely damaged, just like the other ships moored here. Supervising the clipper's repairs is a whip-thin, middle-aged human male with wild, graying hair and steel-blue eyes. He's dressed in brightly colored clothes and dark leather armor, and he carries a long, bejeweled rapier. When he sees your group, he nods and hurries down the gangway to greet you.*

"Hail, hearties! As you can see, it's a right fine mess down here. Not a ship fit to sail, I reckon."

The man is Plankof, and he confirms that none of the docked ships will be fit for travel for several days or, possibly, weeks. If the adventurers need to deploy the *folding astral clipper*, Plankof suggests doing so behind one of Crumbletown's rocky crags or outcroppings so that they can conceal its ability.

The first mate then sets about provisioning the ship and gathering the crew, which takes about a day. The characters have an opportunity to survey the area and investigate the scene of the attack; see event 4. The party can also interact with the new crew members as they arrive; see the "*Mistrunner* Crew" sidebar.

Event 4: Heretic Hunting

Extended Skill Challenge

This "event" is an extended investigation in Crumbletown and a trip to Driftrock. It plays out in multiple scenes.

Using Scenes: The scenes detail possible skill uses and character choices. These guidelines are

intended to show the most common possibilities for interacting with the scene, not to limit other possibilities. The players might come up with different strategies, and roleplaying might obviate the need for some skill checks. Allow reasonable and creative approaches to a scene's obstacles whenever you think it is right to do so.

Tracking Success: During the hunt, "Conclusion" sections give you an idea of how to tally success or failure. The number of successes and failures helps you determine how the final confrontation plays out. You can modify each success or failure as you see fit, based on the characters' actions. For example, rituals, such as Speak with Dead, might allow the characters to learn a lot of information without making other skill checks. That's fine; the encounters are meant to encourage this sort of smart play.

Scene 1: Legwork in Crumbletown

While Plankof outfits the *Mistrunner*, the characters can investigate the Crumbletown attack site and listen to the word on the street.

Use "The Shattered Isle" sidebar for information on Crumbletown's region of the Astral Sea. As indicated in the sidebar, the characters might already know something about the region. Plankof fills in any gaps in their knowledge.

MISTRUNNER CREW

Here are important personalities of the crew.

First Mate Plankof has seen the results of the raider's attacks throughout the Shattered Isle. Plankof is a highly experienced astral sailor, and he knows the fragmented archipelago. He believes the attacker to be a pirate vessel backed by infernal forces. Plankof is ready to avenge friends lost to the attacks. He is also loyal to Crumbletown's lord mayor and fully intends to return the *Mistrunner* after the task is finished.

Swab Mucky is a tiefling female. She's useful in a fight or when extra muscle is needed on deck, but she has taken a few too many blows to the noggin. Her assigned tasks aboard ship are intentionally labor-intensive to keep her distracted from other pursuits. Drinking contests, gambling, and brawling are all in good fun to Mucky.

Rigmaster "Ropeburn" is a half-elf male with twenty years on the Astral Sea, most of it in piracy. He is a rigging expert beyond compare and crafty in bad situations. His nickname refers to his trade and the fact that a hangman's noose left a distinctive scar around his neck. He regarded the event as a lucky escape and cleaned up his act. Ropeburn runs a strict rigging team, with no time for the inexperienced or inept.

Navigator Needle completed his navigation apprenticeship only two trips ago, and he was promoted out of necessity on board the *Mottled Monster*, an *astral schooner*. Unfortunately for him and his crew, the young and dashing human is a better fencer than navigator. He has minimal knowledge of the Shattered Isle. Worse, he's prone to errors, and the crew of the *Mottled Monster* foisted him off on the unsuspecting Plankof. Needle tries to cover his mistakes whenever possible, and he makes weak excuses when things go obviously wrong.

Bosun Shells is a natural sailor who picks up skills quickly. A human female, she has honed her navigation abilities with the hopes of moving up in rank and one day being a captain. As revealed later in the adventure, she can help correct Needle's problems.

Arcana DC 22: At the site where the "enormous black cloud" met the githyanki raiders, a character trained in Arcana can learn the following.

Success: Whatever the attacker was, it had magical power that was significant enough to leave residual auras. It used its power to maintain its position and cloak its true form in the fog cloud. It also had illusion powers, and it used magical fire to attack ships at the port.

Success by 5 or more reveals that the illusion power granted invisibility, and that the attacker used a magic item rather than innate power.

Failure: The attacker left behind significant magical disturbances, but they're so intertwined that they're impossible to read.

Diplomacy DC 22: Local officials such as Vaelushae, the female githzerai dockmaster, could reveal what the local government knows.

Advantage: The party automatically succeeds on this check if the characters reveal that they work for Lord Mayor Hale. A good story or lie (or a successful DC 22 Bluff check) can eliminate a failure on this check and allow another.

Success: The few people who survived the attacker's assault did so by hiding, so none of them can identify what is within the black cloud. Every known attack has been made on a rich target and has involved githyanki raiders. These facts suggest that the attacker is discerning in its targets, the way a clever pirate might be.

Success by 5 or more reveals that the vessel known as the *Etherean Clipper* disappeared some time ago, and that it had been fitted with a *focusing astral helm*.

Failure: The official is too busy to entertain citizens and their idle curiosity.

Insight DC 22: A discerning character can help sort the good information from the bad.

Success: This success changes a failure on Diplomacy or Streetwise to a normal success, and it

changes a normal success with those skills to a success by 5 or more.

Failure: The characters come to the attention of Bowanru's informants, who tell the captain about the party's activities in Crumbletown. If the characters have not concealed their possession of the *Mistrunner,* Bowanru soon learns about it.

Religion DC 22: The site of the attack might contain clues that reveal whether the attacker was an astral creature.

Success: Nothing at the scene clearly indicates the presence of a gigantic astral creature. The astral gases in the area are displaced as if by magical forces. Combined with an Arcana success, this fact points to a vehicle rather than a creature.

Failure: No conclusive clues can be found.

Streetwise DC 22: The sailors in Crumbletown have all sorts of theories as to the nature of the attacker and what it might do next.

Advantage: Regardless of success or failure on this check, attempting to gather this sort of information allows a DC 22 History check to piece together the various stories. Success on the History check allows the characters to discern that all attacks have occurred in the Shattered Isle region between Crumbletown and Driftrock.

Success: Some say a great monster that can cloak itself and become invisible has taken up residence in the Shattered Isle. Others believe the attacker to be a ghost ship or an ancient horror left over from the Dawn War. The most likely and coherent theory is that a githyanki pirate clan has gotten its hands on some mighty magic.

Success by 5 or more reveals the disappearance of the *Windstriker* and its infamous githyanki captain, Bowanru. Some sailors believe the attacker is Bowanru aboard a ghost ship.

Failure: As per "Success," above, except that no clear conclusion can be drawn.

Failure by 5 or more indicates that the party has come to the attention of Bowanru's informants, as per the "Failure" section of the Insight check.

Conclusion: After the *Mistrunner* is ready and the characters are satisfied with their research, the party can proceed. If the adventurers engaged in legwork in Crumbletown, each character receives 500 XP, and the party gains one success on the hunt tally. A party that made no attempt to gather information automatically gains one failure on the hunt tally.

The adventurers might know that they need to sail the Astral Sea between Crumbletown and Driftrock to further the hunt. If not, Plankof recommends sailing to Driftrock on a reconnaissance run of the area in which the mysterious raider has been hunting. In either case, the characters learn that the trip should take five days. Go to scene 2.

Scene 2: Navigation Error

Given the feature-rich nature of the Shattered Isle region, navigation is an easy task relative to its normal difficulty in the open Astral Sea. The lane changes due to the shifting of the motes that make up the Shattered Isle, however, so no reliable, specific path exists between Crumbletown and Driftrock. Worse, the characters have a handicap in Needle if they choose to rely on him.

Navigation: Finding a good path to Driftrock requires a successful DC 22 Arcana check or Nature check each day. Needle automatically fails the second day's check, costing the *Mistrunner* time and running it along the edge of a psychic storm. This failure counts against the characters' tally in the hunt, as does any navigation failure on the characters' part.

Dealing With Needle: Other than navigating on their own or checking the course that Needle lays in, the characters have another way to avoid his incompetence. When Needle chooses the course, Bosun Shells quietly questions the plotting, angering him. A

THE SHATTERED ISLE

The Shattered Isle is remote and not a normal navigation target. Color strand appearances are extremely rare in the area. Easy History, Religion, or Streetwise checks can reveal the information below. These checks do not count as successes or failures on the hunt.

The Shattered Isle consists of hundreds of fragments that range in size from a few feet to several miles across. Most fragments are hundreds of feet to several miles apart. The area is roughly thirty miles in diameter, straddling the astral horizon. Navigating a ship through the fragments is challenging but possible with a decent helmsman.

About half the time, a light brown-red fog covers part or all of the Shattered Isle, reducing visibility to less than a mile. On clear days, visibility compares to the rest of the Astral Sea.

Crumbletown stands on the outermost major fragment, about twenty miles outside the center of the fragment cloud. The settlement is named after its crumbly rock surface, and it is the best connected of the Shattered Isle settlements, thanks to its location and its portal to Sigil. Crumbletown averages 150 residents and 25 to 50 travelers at any given time. It has a decent town guard and an effective lord mayor, so it is a safe haven.

Driftrock is located on a large, oblong fragment near the center of the fragment cloud. It was a longtime pirate hideout until Master Emerald and his shardmind companions took over a few years ago. Since the shardminds turned the place into a fortified trading center, the population has swelled from 50 to 150, plus 50 travelers. Despite efforts to civilize Driftrock, it remains a dangerous place.

successful DC 29 Insight check allows a character to discern the nature of this exchange.

If the characters question Needle and Shells, both dismiss the conflict. Subsequent roleplaying or skill checks determine what is revealed. Shells will not contradict the navigator (whom she is romantically interested in) unless she is pressed. If she does explain her distrust of his plotting, especially if the characters succeed on a navigation check, it becomes apparent that her navigation skill is superior to Needle's.

Psychic Storm: The storm comes into view as the *Mistrunner* nears its edge. If the characters succeeded in dealing with Needle's bungling, they start with one success on the Ride the Storm skill challenge. If they failed to deal with Needle appropriately, they start the encounter with one failure on the Ride the Storm skill challenge.

Perception DC 29: The character spots the storm early, gaining the party one success before the leading edge hits the *Mistrunner.*

When the storm hits, read:

Among the motes, the astral air darkens and flashes. The astral wind picks up, carrying rust-colored particles with it, and your mind buzzes as the Mistrunner *approaches the edge of the phenomenon. After another flash, a thunderous vibration shakes your mind, although no sound can be heard besides the wind.*

"Psychic storm!" yells Plankof. "Hard to port! We have to ride her edge!"

Ride the Storm

To ride the edge, the characters have to make skill checks. The experience is harrowing, like having a thunderstorm inside one's head.

Level: 15 (3,600 XP).

Complexity: 3 (requires eight successes before three failures).

Primary Skills: Arcana, Athletics, Diplomacy, Endurance, Insight, Nature, Religion, Thievery.

Arcana or Nature (DC 22; two successes maximum): The character monitors astral currents to help navigate the ship through the Shattered Isle motes along the edge of the storm.

Athletics or Thievery (DC 22; two successes maximum): The character manipulates the rigging and the physical aspects of the ship to help it ride the astral wind.

Diplomacy (DC 22; one success maximum): The character coordinates efforts efficiently, keeping everyone working and in good spirits.

Endurance (DC 22; group check, one success maximum): Each character attempts this check. If half or more of the characters succeed, they all maintain enough stamina to do their duties or aid others efficiently.

Insight (DC 22; two successes maximum): A character who has the arcane, divine, or psionic power source can use his or her mind to shield the *Mistrunner* from the storm's chaotic mental energies with this check.

Religion (DC 22; two successes maximum): The character senses the divine nature of the astral grime in the storm winds, indicating that it is the remains of a dominion or even a deity. The character can manipulate the divine matter to keep it from collecting on the *Mistrunner.*

Success: The *Mistrunner* runs ahead of the storm, and the characters gain one success on the hunt tally.

Failure: The characters gain one failure on the hunt tally. Further, the *Mistrunner* takes 1d4 × 50 damage, is covered in astral grime, and is blown off course. Since the vessel has to be repaired and cleaned before it moves on, the trip to Driftrock takes one extra day.

Scene 3: Burning Hulk

This scene occurs about midday the day after the *Mistrunner* leaves scene 2. The party comes upon a ship that was attacked recently by the *Etherean Heretic.*

When the scene opens, read:

A cloud of smoke or dark mist comes into view a few miles away. It billows out into the clear astral sky among the motes of the Shattered Isle.

If the characters investigate, read:

A burning astral schooner *comes into view. Its sails have burned away. Masts on the upper portion of the ship are smashed, burned, and toppled, pointing astern, as though something struck them simultaneously. The schooner's metal control rods are drooping, as if melted. Parts of the vessel are still on fire, and corpses litter its deck.*

Characters are free to investigate the ship.

Ship: The schooner's name is the *Greenleaf*, and it is damaged beyond repair. Plankof and other members of the *Mistrunner* crew know that the *Greenleaf* was a merchant ship.

Arcana DC 22: A spellcaster or magic weapon launched rays of fire at the vessel, eventually setting its sails and hull aflame. The damage is consistent with the damage to ships in Crumbletown. A character who succeeded on the Arcana checks in Crumbletown can easily make this correlation.

If this check succeeds by 5 or more, the character realizes that the attacker struck from below the astral horizon, which is unconventional.

Perception DC 22: The *Greenleaf*'s cargo has been removed, but the character finds a locked hidden compartment in the captain's quarters.

A subsequent successful DC 22 Thievery check opens the compartment. Within it is a logbook, indicating that the *Greenleaf,* under Captain Jarkand, made several trips between Driftrock and other ports

in the Astral Sea. The ship carried supplies and payroll for various merchant and mercenary companies.

Crew: All the crew members, beings of differing races, are dead.

Heal DC 22: Injuries indicate that the crew died in battle with humanoids wielding magic and weapons. Some crew members were executed. A few sailors who died from magical injury are scorched, but most have bloodshot eyes, bleeding ears, and bloody noses.

A subsequent successful DC 22 Arcana check reveals that such injuries are consistent with psychic damage from mental assault.

Perception DC 29: The crew's possessions have already been picked over for valuables, though under one corpse, the character finds a broken silver longsword. Characters who engaged the raiders in event 1 recognize the sword as a githyanki weapon.

The Attacker: Careful observation can reveal the attacker's magical signature. Combined successes on the following checks point to a vehicle and show the vehicle's path of departure toward Driftrock.

Arcana DC 22: Whatever the attacker was, its magical power was significant enough to leave residual auras. It used this power to maintain its position.

Religion DC 22: Nothing aboard the *Greenleaf* indicates the presence of a gigantic astral creature. Astral matter nearby has been displaced by magical forces.

Nihilath Shroud

As the characters wrap up the search of the burning vessel, or whenever you think it appropriate, an astral hazard approaches.

When the cloud appears, read:
A roiling wave of gray ectoplasmic matter moves swiftly toward the burning ship. It continually sprouts tentacles, which pull and tear at each other and are reabsorbed into the larger mass.

Dungeoneering DC 22: *The cloud is a Nihilath shroud, an astral phenomenon that is known to hunt gith races, such as the githyanki or githzerai. The shroud, which is not sentient, can suck the life force out of creatures.*

Dungeoneering or History DC 29: *The ancient mind flayer empire of Nihilath created these shrouds and loosed them on the Astral Sea to plague the illithids' escaped gith slaves.*

The shroud is more of a clue that indicates githyanki activity than it is a danger. If the characters remain on the *Greenleaf* or in its area as the shroud arrives, though, they are slowed and begin to lose one healing surge per round that they spend in the 20-square by 20-square aberrant cloud.

Conclusion: After the characters investigate the ship and evade the Nihilath shroud, they gain 500 XP and one success on the hunt tally. (You are free to change this outcome if the characters come to very wrong conclusions or botch the search.) If the party fails to board the *Greenleaf*, they gain only rudimentary knowledge about what happened and gain one failure on the hunt tally.

Scene 4: Shipwreck

Encounter Level 15 (6,300 XP)

The adventurers discover a wrecked *planar dromond*.

Light: Bright.

Monsters: 1 impersonator mimic, 1 mirror mimic, 6 mimic spawn, 1 astral hulk. The placement and appearance of the monsters varies.

Other Creatures: Nokle, Eronom.

When the scene opens, read:
About a quarter of a mile away along the astral horizon, the remains of a large sailing vessel are smashed against a Shattered Isle fragment. The ship's rigging is burned, and wreckage is strewn across the area. The fragment slowly tumbles, carrying the wreckage with it.

If the characters sail closer, read:
As the fragment rotates, it offers a better view of the wreck. The stern of the ship sits relatively upright, and upon it is a name written in Elven runes. The bow lies smashed and twisted between two rocky outcroppings. Large pieces of the ship's shattered keel are visible in the debris. They are covered in runes.

Anyone who can read Elven can see that the ship is called the *Golden Wanderer*. How this encounter plays out depends on the party's success on the hunt so far.

If the party has more successes than failures on the hunt, read:
A few corpses lie on the quarterdeck of the wreck, and two eladrin are on the ship's stern. One lies unmoving, while the other fires arrows at debris and a few other eladrin who are moving toward him through a breach in the ship.

The archer signals to you for aid.

The archer is Eronom. She communicates the situation to the characters as the *Mistrunner* approaches, warning them about the mimics and that the ship carries a living astral hulk. Right before the characters arrive, she attacks a box that turns out to be a mimic spawn.

Eronom is the bodyguard of Nokle, the unmoving eladrin. Nokle is unconscious.

After the characters join the fight, one of the mimics knocks Eronom unconscious before her turn.

If the party has more failures than successes on the hunt, read:
Two eladrin lie prone, face down, on the ship's stern, and a few similarly clad humanoids mill about the fallen.

Several eladrin signal to you for aid.

All the "eladrin" and some of the boxes on the ship are mimics. Eronom and Nokle are dead.

Impersonator Mimic **Level 16 Controller**
Medium aberrant magical beast XP 1,400

HP 160; **Bloodied** 80 **Initiative** +14
AC 30, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 27 **Perception** +13
Speed 6 Darkvision, tremorsense 5
Resist 10 acid

Standard Actions

⊕ **Slam** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 11 damage.

Forcible Conversion (charm) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +19 vs. Fortitude
Hit: The target is dominated (save ends).

Minor Actions

Call to Harvest (charm) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +19 vs. Will
Hit: The mimic slides the target 4 squares, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of the mimic's next turn.

Shapeshift (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: The mimic assumes one of the following forms. It can't change its size. It remains in the chosen form until it uses this power again.

Ooze Form: The mimic becomes an ooze. When it squeezes while it is in this form, it moves at full speed rather than half speed, it doesn't take the -5 penalty to attack rolls, and it doesn't grant combat advantage for squeezing.

Humanoid Form: The mimic gains a +4 bonus to Bluff checks. In addition, it can use all the languages known by the last humanoid creature it killed.

Object Form: While in this form, the mimic has resist 10 to all damage, is immobilized, and cannot attack. In addition, a creature must succeed on a DC 31 Perception check to notice that the mimic is a living creature.

Free Actions

Absorb ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Requirement: The mimic can use *absorb* only during its turn.
Effect: The mimic reduces one mimic spawn that is adjacent to it or occupying its space (see the mimic spawn's *one with master* power) to 0 hit points. When it does so, it gains 1 action point.

Skills Bluff +20 (+24 while the mimic is in humanoid form), Stealth +19
Str 21 (+13) **Dex** 22 (+14) **Wis** 20 (+13)
Con 24 (+15) **Int** 26 (+16) **Cha** 24 (+15)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Deep Speech

Mirror Mimic **Level 15 Lurker**
Medium aberrant magical beast XP 1,200

HP 118; **Bloodied** 59 **Initiative** +16
AC 29, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 27 **Perception** +13
Speed 6, phasing Darkvision, tremorsense 5

Standard Actions

⊕ **Slam** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 10 damage.

Body Duplication (conjuration, polymorph, psychic, teleportation) ✦ **Recharge** when the mimic has no duplicates
Attack: Melee 1 (one Medium creature); +18 vs. Will
Hit: The mimic assumes the form of the target and teleports up to 3 squares. The mimic also conjures three duplicates of the target within 3 squares of it. The duplicates can be attacked and have the same defenses as the mimic. The mimic can take a minor action to move each of the duplicates up to its speed. A creature must succeed on a DC 35 Insight check to tell the difference between the mimic and the duplicates.

Each duplicate lasts until it takes any damage, which destroys it. When a duplicate is destroyed, the target of the *body duplication* takes 3d8 + 10 psychic damage. When all the duplicates are destroyed, the mimic reverts to its normal form.

Move Actions

Body Transfer (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The mimic must have at least one duplicate created by *body duplication.*
Effect: The mimic teleports, secretly swapping places with one of its duplicates within 10 squares of it. Its next attack before the end of the turn deals 8 extra damage.

Skills Bluff +19 (+23 while the mimic is duplicating a creature), Stealth +17
Str 17 (+10) **Dex** 21 (+12) **Wis** 22 (+13)
Con 22 (+13) **Int** 20 (+12) **Cha** 25 (+14)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Deep Speech

6 Mimic Spawn **Level 16 Minion Lurker**
Medium aberrant magical beast XP 350 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +18
AC 30, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 26 **Perception** +13
Speed 6 Darkvision, tremorsense 5
Resist 10 acid

Traits

One with Master
The mimic spawn can end its move in the same space as an impersonator mimic. While it occupies an impersonator mimic's space, the mimic spawn moves with the impersonator mimic and cannot attack, be targeted, or take damage. Up to four mimic spawns can occupy an impersonator mimic's space.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Slam** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 12 damage.

Minor Actions

Shapeshift (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: The mimic assumes one of the following forms. It can't change its size. It remains in the chosen form until it uses this power again.

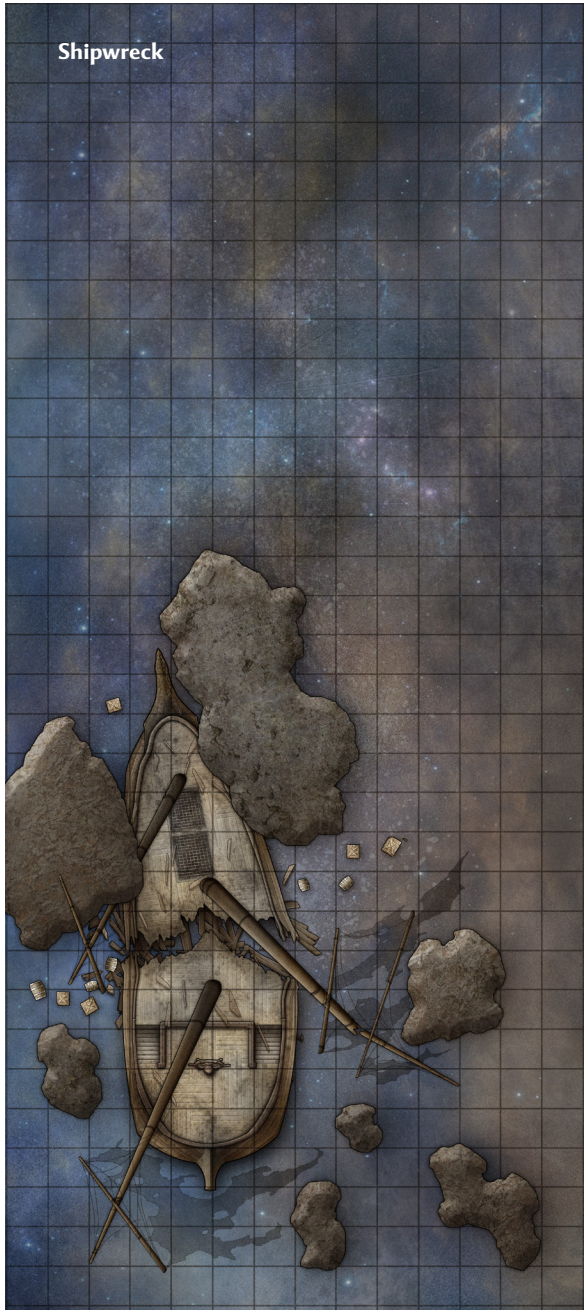
Ooze Form: The mimic becomes an ooze. When it squeezes while it is in this form, it moves at full speed rather than half speed, it doesn't take the -5 penalty to attack rolls, and it doesn't grant combat advantage for squeezing.

Object Form: While in this form, the mimic has resist 10 to all damage, is immobilized, and cannot attack. In addition, a creature must succeed on a DC 31 Perception check to notice that the mimic is a living creature.

Skills Stealth +19
Str 21 (+13) **Dex** 22 (+14) **Wis** 20 (+13)
Con 24 (+15) **Int** 26 (+16) **Cha** 24 (+15)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Deep Speech

If the characters fail to identify the mimics as monsters, the mimics play the parts of Nokle and Eronom to lure the party aboard the wreck. As soon as the creatures have the party at a disadvantage, they attack with surprise.

Tactics: The mimics look like eladrin. The mirror mimic has taken the form of an eladrin that is already dead. It keeps up this ruse at first, but it uses *body duplication* on a player character as soon as possible. All mimics engage any attackers, flying through the astral air to fight enemies that remain aboard the *Mistrunner.*



Development: During any battle aboard the *Golden Wanderer*, characters can hear banging belowdecks. If the impersonator mimic or the mirror mimic is destroyed, an astral hulk trapped within the wreck's hold breaks free. Although it does not consider the mimics to be allies, it prefers nonaberrant food and attacks the characters when it can.

Astral Hulk **Level 17 Soldier**
Large immortal magical beast XP 1,600

HP 167; **Bloodied** 83 **Initiative** +13
AC 33, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 29 **Perception** +12
Speed 5, burrow 2 (tunneling) Darkvision, tremorsense 5

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claws** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 14 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the hulk's next turn.

✧ **Gaze of Lassitude** (charm) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +20 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 3 damage, and the hulk pulls the target 4 squares. In addition, the target is slowed (save ends).

✧ **Gaze of Annihilation** ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +20 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + 5 damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The target is marked until the end of the hulk's next turn.

Triggered Actions

↯ **Entrapping Mandibles** ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The hulk must not have a creature grabbed.
Trigger: An enemy marked by the hulk shifts.
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Melee 1 (the triggering enemy); +22 vs. Fortitude
Hit: The target is grabbed.

Str 30 (+18) **Dex** 17 (+11) **Wis** 18 (+12)
Con 23 (+14) **Int** 8 (+7) **Cha** 13 (+9)
Alignment evil **Languages** understands Deep Speech

Nokle and Eronom

The eladrin archer is Eronom, and the eladrin next to her is Nokle. Unless they're dead due to the characters' failures so far on the hunt, any healing or a successful Heal check can awaken the injured eladrin. They're both very grateful. Devastated by the attack and the loss of his crew, Nokle tells all that he knows about the attack.

Nokle, a Feywild merchant, owns the *Golden Wanderer*. He used the *planar dromond* to carry anything legal. On this trip, the *Wanderer* carried weapons, construction tools, and fine clothing. The vessel also carried a few exotic creatures to fill a special order from a secretive wizard, who was going to have them picked up at the Driftrock docks.

Near where the wreck is located along the shipping lane, the *Etherean Heretic* came up from below the astral horizon and attacked the *Golden Wanderer*. The initial attack came as a barrage of searing rays from the pirate ship, which then passed overhead dragging hooks to foul the *Wanderer*'s rigging. Crippled, the eladrin ship tried to flee but crashed into a cluster of fragments.

As githyanki from the *Heretic* swarmed aboard, Nokle and Eronom hid in a secret compartment belowdecks. Later, thinking the coast was clear, they emerged to find the pirates gone and the entire crew massacred. The pirates left most of the exotic creatures alive, though. Some of the creatures were mimics, which took the appearance of the eladrin crew and got the drop on Nokle and his bodyguard.

The merchant admits to keeping a regular schedule and preferring the plotted shipping lanes. These facts likely made it easy for the *Etherean Heretic* to ambush them. Nokle is also certain that vessels traveling into and out of Driftrock are prime targets.

Development: If the characters find the eladrin slain, they might, at your discretion, discover other clues aboard the *Golden Wanderer*. Use scene 3 to

improvise any search the characters make of the ruined *planar dromond*.

Treasure: The *Golden Wanderer* is wrecked beyond repair. Although Nokle has nothing left aboard his ship, he offers 50 pp and a magic item (level 1d4 + 14) for passage to Driftrock. He also promises to use his influence to introduce the adventurers to the right people after they arrive.

Conclusion: If the characters save the eladrin traders and take them to Driftrock, each character gains 300 bonus XP. Further, the information Nokle provides confirms the characters' suspicions or points them in the right direction if they've gone astray. If the characters gain this information, they gain one success on the hunt tally. Failure to gain this information counts as one failure on the tally.

Scene 5: Driftrock

The adventurers arrive at Driftrock.

When the characters arrive, read:

Driftrock is a flattened, oblong fragment of astral matter about three miles long and one mile across. Using the Astral Sea's peculiar gravity, the town wraps around the circumference of the fragment, arranged like a series of rings on a finger, with each town ward making up a ring.

Astral vessels dock at one end of the fragment in the Harbor Point ward. Harbor Point is also the center of trade, which is the lifeblood of the town.

Moving up the fragment, away from Harbor Point, the next ward is the Local Quarter, which has residences, shops, and meeting halls. After that is Fort Quartz, the newly built military and government center of the fragment.

Using Driftrock: This town is much like any other outside the Astral Sea, but its inhabitants are more varied and unusual. Driftrock provides the characters with opportunities to discuss their findings with local residents. The characters can also try to gather more information.

Nokle's Help: If alive, the eladrin merchant can direct the characters to specific sources or people, granting a +2 bonus to all checks to gather information while in Driftrock.

Town Leadership: Master Emerald, a shardmind dedicated to the God Shard philosophy (see page 13 of *Player's Handbook*® 3), runs Driftrock. With the aid of a dozen other shardminds, Emerald intends to turn Driftrock into a center of commerce and power. He ran the worst of the pirates and charlatans out of town, but he's unwilling to risk confronting powerful enemies directly, since that would jeopardize Driftrock's neutrality and safety.

Legwork in Driftrock: If the characters already know or suspect that the *Etherean Heretic* is the attacker, they can confirm their findings and come up with a plan to confront the pirates.

The following skills are guidelines meant to aid roleplaying. The players can and should come up with their own approaches.

Diplomacy DC 22: The characters can question merchants and workers in Harbor Point. Sailors remember the *Greenleaf* (the burning hulk from scene 3) as a regular visitor, usually carrying supplies and payroll. It was the richest ship to leave Driftrock in recent history.

As the characters piece together the *Heretic*'s recent attacks, two bits of information surface. First, the *Heretic* likely has one or more informants in Driftrock. Second, the richest ship currently making ready to leave port is an *astral skiff* named *Redsail*.

Insight DC 22: While the characters gather information, they notice a bladeling shadowing them or checking out the *Mistrunner*. The bladeling, Dacks, is an informant for Bowanru. If confronted, Dacks is likely to back down. If the bladeling is appropriately intimidated or cajoled (DC 22), or if he is made to believe that Bowanru won't live much longer, he spills that the pirate captain was hoping to steal the *Mistrunner* from Crumbletown. Dacks also knows Bowanru's tactics and ruthlessness.

If the characters have publicly displayed the function of their *folding astral clipper*, Dacks knows that the *Mistrunner* is Bowanru's next target. The bladeling was ordered to collect intelligence on the clipper's crew. The githyanki wants the *Mistrunner* intact, which is a deviation from his usual methods.

Streetwise DC 22: Any successful attempt to gather information on the *Etherean Heretic* allows the character to learn the gossip in Driftrock, which says that Bowanru captains the vessel. The savvy swabs in Driftrock rightly put the disappearance of the *Etherean Clipper*, the disappearance of the *Windstriker*, and the sudden appearance of the *Etherean Heretic* together. The characters also learn that Bowanru's lair is on a well-defended fragment called Skullface.

Conclusion: If the characters learn useful information in Driftrock, they each earn 500 XP, and the party gains one success on the hunt tally. If they do not learn more about Bowanru and his plans, they gain a failure.

Plans: By now, the characters are probably formulating a plan to confront Bowanru. Here are some possibilities and the likely effect.

Becoming a Target: The characters might realize that Bowanru wants the *Mistrunner*. They can spread the word that the *folding astral clipper* is in Driftrock and talk about when they plan to set sail. Bowanru takes the bait.

Tailing the Redsail: If the characters learn that the *Redsail* is a likely target, they can escort or follow the laden skiff. The *Etherean Heretic* does indeed attack the merchant vessel (or its escort—see "Hunt Results" below).

Master Emerald is willing to use his wealth and influence to convince the *Redsail*'s captain to send its shipment aboard the *Mistrunner* instead. This strategy

has much the same effect as making the *Mistrunner* an open target.

Skullface Assault: The characters might want to set up an ambush near Skullface or assault the lair directly. This plan works to a point, but lookouts spot the *Mistrunner*'s approach to Skullface. The *Etherean Heretic* then rushes to engage the invader on the open sea. After Bowanru sees that the attacker is the *Mistrunner,* he tries to board it rather than destroy it.

Hunt Results

If the characters have earned more successes than failures in their hunt tally, they have the advantage over the *Heretic* in the upcoming fight, gaining surprise or a superior position. For example, they spot the *Heretic* on its low approach before it gets too close, surprise the *Heretic* as it assaults the *Redsail,* or catch the *Heretic* near Skullface before Bowanru can cloak it in the *astral fog.*

If the characters have earned more failures than successes in their hunt tally, the *Etherean Heretic* gets the drop on them somehow. For instance, the party fails to spot the enemy vessel until it's right on top of them, the *Heretic* uses fragments near Skullface to evade detection and attacks from an unexpected direction, or the *Heretic* ambushes the *Mistrunner* directly despite the lure of the *Redsail.*

If the party's successes and failures are equal in number, the *Heretic* and the *Mistrunner* meet in a way that offers neither the advantage in the confrontation.

Event 5: Endgame

Combat Encounter Level 17 (8,000 XP)

The adventure comes down to a battle between the pirates and their pursuers. The circumstances of this battle depend on the outcome of the hunt.

Light: Bright.

Environment: An astral mist reduces visibility to a quarter mile.

Monsters: Captain Bowanru, 4 githyanki raiders, 2 githyanki mindslicers.

The shrouded *Etherean Heretic* comes up from below the astral horizon. Unless Bowanru already knows that the enemy ship is the *Mistrunner,* he targets it with *searing barrage.* If the *Heretic* has the advantage, this barrage is the party's first warning of the pirates' approach. Otherwise, the *Mistrunner* avoids the first barrage or surprises the *Heretic.*

After Bowanru discerns that the enemy ship is the *Mistrunner,* which he wishes to capture, he maneuvers for a boarding action.

Maneuvering: Make opposed checks between Bowanru, who uses Arcana, and the *Mistrunner's* pilot, who uses Athletics (use a +14 bonus if a pilot recruited by Plankof, not a player character, is helming the ship). The result determines the winner for the boarding action. The pilot of the ship that has the advantage from the hunt tally gains a +5 bonus to this check. For the party, other characters can assist with Arcana or Religion (spotting astral currents to aid speed and turning) or Stealth (plotting a confusing course) to grant an additional bonus of up to +4 to the check. Bowanru has no worthy assistants who can assist with his check.

Boarding Action: The ships come alongside each other. The winner of the maneuvering portion of the encounter gains a surprise round. When the ships are in position, play the battle out on the tactical map. Each side begins on its own ship. The *Heretic* crew uses its surprise round, if any, to board the *Mistrunner.*

Regardless of which ship is boarded, Captain Bowanru enters the fight to challenge the characters directly, along with four githyanki raiders and two githyanki mindslicers. The rest of the *Heretic* crew engages the *Mistrunner* crew—see "Crew Combat" under the "Tactics" section.

Captain Bowanru **Level 17 Elite Controller**
Medium natural humanoid, githyanki XP 3,200

HP 328; **Bloodied** 164 **Initiative** +9
AC 30, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 29 **Perception** +17
Speed 6
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

Astral Fog ✦ Aura 3
The aura is lightly obscured to enemies, unless it overlaps another *astral fog* aura. Such an area of overlapping *astral fog* auras is heavily obscured.

Standard Actions

Silver Longsword (psychic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 2 damage, and ongoing 10 psychic damage (save ends).

Mindfire (fire, implement, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +20 vs. Will
Hit: 2d8 + 7 fire and psychic damage, and ongoing 10 fire and psychic damage (save ends).

Double Attack ✦ At-Will
Effect: Bowanru makes two basic attacks.

Searing Barrage (fire, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Effect: Bowanru uses *mindfire* four times.

Move Actions

Telekinetic Leap ✦ Recharge when first bloodied
Effect: Bowanru flies up to 10 squares, or one ally within 10 squares of Bowanru can fly up to 10 squares as a free action.

Minor Actions

Astral Fog Confusion ✦ At-Will
Effect: Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst taking ongoing damage); Bowanru slides the target up to 3 squares.

Skills Arcana +19, Stealth +14

Str 14 (+10)	**Dex** 12 (+9)	**Wis** 19 (+12)
Con 20 (+13)	**Int** 22 (+14)	**Cha** 24 (+15)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Equipment leather armor, silver longsword, rod

Assign two raiders and one mindslicer facing the party the following power.

Minor Actions

Astral Fog (aura) ✦ **Encounter**

Effect: The githyanki activates an aura 1 that lasts until the end of its next turn. The aura is lightly obscured to enemies, unless it overlaps another *astral fog* aura. Such an area of overlapping *astral fog* auras is heavily obscured.

4 Githyanki Raiders — **Level 13 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid — XP 800 each

HP 126; **Bloodied** 63 — **Initiative** +11
AC 27, **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 27 — **Perception** +9
Speed 6

Traits

Combat Advantage (psychic)
The githyanki deals 2d8 extra psychic damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Silver Longsword** (psychic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +18 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 12 psychic damage.

Raider's Strike (psychic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +18 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 12 psychic damage.
Effect: The githyanki shifts up to 2 squares.

Slash and Dash (psychic, weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Melee 1 (one or two creatures); +18 vs. AC. The githyanki can shift up to its speed before making the second attack.
Hit: 4d8 + 14 psychic damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Move Actions

Raider's Step ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The githyanki shifts up to 2 squares.

Telekinetic Leap ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: The githyanki flies up to 5 squares, or one ally within 10 squares of it can fly up to 5 squares as a free action.

Skills History +7, Insight +14
Str 22 (+12) **Dex** 17 (+9) **Wis** 16 (+9)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 9 (+5) **Cha** 8 (+5)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Equipment leather armor, silver longsword

2 Githyanki Mindslicers — **Level 13 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid — XP 800 each

HP 98; **Bloodied** 49 — **Initiative** +9
AC 27, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 23 — **Perception** +12
Speed 6

Standard Actions

⊕ **Silver Longsword** (psychic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +18 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 5 psychic damage.

Mind Slice (psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +18 vs. Will
Hit: 3d8 + 8 psychic damage.

Psychic Barrage (psychic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅
Attack: Area burst 1 within 20 (creatures in the burst); +18 vs. Will
Hit: 2d8 + 8 psychic damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 psychic damage and can't use daily or encounter attack powers (save ends both).

Move Actions

Telekinetic Leap ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: The githyanki flies up to 5 squares, or one ally within 10 squares of it can fly up to 5 squares as a free action.

Skills History +11, Insight +12
Str 14 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 12 (+7)
Con 14 (+8) **Int** 17 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+6)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
Equipment robes, overcoat, silver longsword

Tactics: Bowanru and his githyanki aim to kill everyone aboard the *Mistrunner* and take the *folding astral clipper* as a prize. His mindslicers move to make ranged attacks in relative safety, possibly boarding the ship with the fewest enemies on deck.

Crew Combat: The other *Heretic* crew members, which are not included among the listed monsters, engage the *Mistrunner* crew. Rather than rolling dice for the two groups, run this clash as a cinematic narrative backdrop to the battle. For every success in the characters' hunt tally, a member of the *Mistrunner* crew dispatches a foe with style or escapes death with grace. Each failure in the hunt tally results in a death among the *Mistrunner* crew, in this order: Needle, Ropeburn, Mucky, Shells, and Plankof.

Treasure: The *Etherean Heretic*'s current treasure store is kept in two *bags of holding* in the captain's cabin. It includes 13,000 gp, 120 pp, four flawless diamonds (5,000 gp each), and two magic items of level 1d4 + 16. The Crumbletown portal key sits in an adjacent cabinet among bottles of spirits and ale. Someone (Bowanru) has obviously been using the key for drinking. The ruby shards are missing from the chalice, although 2d6 shards (250 gp each) can be found on slain pirates.

In addition, the *Etherean Heretic* and the *focusing astral helm* are treasure. Bowanru also has the second of the *pouches of shared acquisition*. If the characters didn't recover the other pouch in event 1, Bowanru has both of them.

Focusing Astral Helm — Level 19 Rare

This gem-encrusted wheel bolsters its host astral ship and enhances the magical powers of the pilot.

Wondrous Item 105,000 gp

Properties

- ✦ The helm's other properties work only aboard an astral vessel on which the helm is installed as a steering wheel.
- ✦ The helm increases its vessel's speed by 2 and its defenses to the pilot's level + 10.
- ✦ The pilot must take 10 minutes to attune to the helm, which can have only one attuned pilot at a given time.
- ✦ While touching the helm with at least one free hand, the pilot can choose 1 square on or adjacent to the helm's vessel to use as the origin square for the pilot's area, close, or ranged implement attack powers.
- ✦ While touching the helm with at least one free hand, if the pilot activates a nondamaging aura, the helm's vessel is considered to be the source from which the aura emanates. The helm's vessel can emanate only one such aura at a time. The vessel itself, including its whole area, is unaffected by the aura.

Utility Power (Illusion) ✦ **Daily** (Standard Action)

Effect: The helm's vessel and all aboard it become invisible for 5 minutes or until it or someone aboard it attacks. Any creature that leaves the invisible vessel's area immediately ends the invisibility effect on itself.

Conclusion

The remaining *Mistrunner* crew members, especially Plankof, pressure the characters to return some of the treasure to Driftrock and Crumbletown, particularly the Sigil portal key, the ruby shards, and the *folding astral clipper*. A party that fails to complete the quest to return this treasure is sure to make numerous enemies in the Shattered Isle.

If the battle goes badly for the adventurers, they are left for dead in the Astral Sea and stripped of all valuables. A passing vessel bound for Driftrock might rescue any survivors.

In the end, the characters might have many reasons to assault Bowanru's lair on the fragment called Skullface. That is the subject of another adventure that you can create.

About the Author

Sterling Hershey is an architect and freelance game designer. He was one of the designers of *Monster Vault™: Threats to the Nentir Vale™* and contributes to *D&D® Insider*. Sterling has worked extensively in a galaxy far, far away, designing many books and products for the *Star Wars Role-playing Game* and *Star Wars Miniatures*.

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Art of the Ancients

By Matthew J. Hanson

Illustrations by Ralph Horsley and James Zhang

Jallop examined the squat statue of a horned goblin holding a bowl. "My word," he said. "An intact icon of Glabriat. And if I'm not mistaken it dates to the Kagolion Dynasty!"

Most fantasy worlds feature fallen empires with ruins still full of treasures for brave adventurers to loot. Though these treasures might be as mundane as a box full of gold coins, they can also include valuable works of art that bring the empires of old to life.

Just as a statue, painting, or necklace created during the Roman Republic looks markedly different from one crafted during China's Tang dynasty, the art objects of far-flung fantasy empires should differ. These differences might reflect aesthetic values, local materials, and a particular people's level of technology. Moreover, unlike real-world empires, fantasy empires were built by many different races. Whether humanoid or not, all such races have their own culture and sensibilities.

This article presents sample art objects for a draconic empire, a diabolical empire, a dwarven empire, a fey empire, and a goblinoid empire. For each empire, four art objects are presented for each of the treasure values suggested in the *Rules Compendium*™ and the *Dungeon Master's Guide*®. When you assign treasure, choose an appropriate object or roll a d4 to determine randomly.

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MAGICAL ART

Some of the more expensive treasures in this article feature magical enhancements. These items cannot provide any mechanical benefit, including bonuses to attack rolls or skill checks. Treat them as art objects rather than magic items when assigning treasure.

Some of the treasures in this article, such as paintings and writings, might be worth their full value only to a collector who can appreciate their history. You might require the adventurers to locate such an expert before they can sell their loot.

Draconic Empire

These treasures are found in the ruins of empires ruled by dragons, dragonborn, or other draconic creatures. In addition to their obvious draconic styling, such treasures use precious metals in their construction and are often crafted to match ceremonial weapons and armor. Sources of these treasures could include the dragonborn empire of Arkhosia, the continent of Argonnessen in the Eberron® setting, or Returned Abeir in the Forgotten Realms® setting.

250 gp

1 A gold bracelet made to look like a serpent devouring its tail.

2 A clay funeral urn, decorated with a dragonborn warrior thrusting a spear through the heart of a four-headed hydra.

3 A lacquered deck of Three-Dragon Ante cards.

4 A set of four bronze bowls, each decorated with the inscription of a sword, spear, axe, or hammer.

1,500 gp

1 A dozen gold and silver loops designed to be worn as ornaments on a dragonborn's crest.

2 A golden necklace featuring a draconic head with turquoise eyes.

3 A battle standard woven of golden thread and bearing the symbol of the legendary Koteth battalion.

4 A pair of silver dice with garnet pips.

2,500 gp

1 A silver dagger with a jagged blade. The pommel is set with alexandrite.

2 A set of thirteen scrolls containing a detailed history of the draconic empire, written at the height of its power.

3 A miniature replica of a dragon-headed longboat made of pure gold.

4 A brooch resembling a golden claw holding an emerald.

HOW ARE WE GOING TO MOVE THAT?

Larger art objects such as statues and fountains are not easily thrown into an adventurer's backpack. Such items should be used sparingly, but they can make for a fun change of pace. Never underestimate the resourcefulness of a band of adventurers determined to collect their pay.

7,500 gp

1 A ceremonial battle helm adorned with sapphires.

2 A platinum necklace whose pendant is a miniature replica of a curved draconic sword studded with fire opals.

3 A golden box engraved with a lightning motif.

4 A mithral statue of a dragonborn general mounted on a fierce war drake.

15,000 gp

1 A statuette of Bahamut cast of pure platinum with sapphire eyes.

2 A mithral shield studded with emeralds and bearing the sign of the once-noble house of Kroshav.

3 A map of the draconic empire at its height. It is drawn on the hide of a pit fiend and inked with its blood.

4 A large diamond carved in the shape of a dragonborn tooth.

50,000 gp

1 A chess set featuring chromatic dragons pitted against metallic dragons, with Bahamut and Tiamat serving as the kings. The metallic dragons are cast in their appropriate metals, while the chromatic dragons are set with ruby (red), sapphire (blue), emerald (green), onyx (black), and pearl (white).

2 A dragon-headed scepter made of celestial gold and studded with astral diamonds.

3 A silver cup imbued with the power of elemental cold. It instantly chills any liquid poured into it.

4 A suit of platinum-chased barding adorned with sapphires and emeralds, sized and shaped for an adult dragon.

Diabolical Empire

These treasures come from an empire ruled by devils or tieflings. The relics of this decadent and corrupt culture include many beautiful works of art with a dark twist. Bael Turath is the classic example of a diabolical empire.

250 gp

1 A jade comb with a succubus engraved on the handle.

2 A bloodred dress woven of silk and adorned with black lace.

3 A fine perfume that smells of roses and a hint of brimstone.

4 A small chest made of ebony and inlaid with silver. A close examination reveals a false bottom.

1,500 gp

1 A finely woven tapestry depicting the hierarchy of devils standing on each other's backs, with Asmodeus at the peak.

2 A silver necklace whose jeweled pendant resembles a summoning circle.

3 An original folio of Akta L'Strell's comedic play *Murder for Lunch*.

4 A gold bracelet etched with flames and set with a black pearl.

2,500 gp

1 A fine oil painting in a frame of silver and gold, depicting a smartly dressed tiefling.

2 A golden wind-up toy that plays a gruesome folk song. The clockwork figures on the box reenact a beheading, with the final chop coinciding with the climax of the music.

3 A fine flute crafted from a unicorn horn.

4 A hand mirror made of a bronze dragon scale and decorated with garnets.

7,500 gp

1 A stylish set of noble's robes woven with magical shadow.

2 An enchanted painting depicting the destruction of the dragonborn city of Krenstak. Magic in the pigments causes the fire and smoke to shift as though the city still burned.

3 A bejeweled hookah made of gold and red-tinted glass.

4 A pair of boots made from the hide of a copper dragon.

15,000 gp

1 A stunningly lifelike and full-sized painting of a succubus offering an apple to a handsome human male. The signature indicates that it is a lost work by the master painter Kal Torlan.

2 A glittering white gown woven with astral thread and set with a pair of feathered wings. At the stroke of midnight, the dress turns black and the wings turn leathery. The garment regains its angelic appearance at dawn.

3 A fan made of thinly beaten gold and infused with the power of elemental air.

4 A mithral tiara adorned with rubies.

50,000 gp

1 An adamantine brand imbued with elemental fire and bearing the symbol of Morthos, a once-powerful tiefling house. The brand feels warm to all but the creature being branded, which suffers a painful moment of searing heat.

2 A complete set of silverware in twelve place settings. Each of the two knives, three spoons, and five forks in each setting is adorned with a black pearl.

3 A human skeleton plated with gold and adorned with rubies. When commanded, the skeleton animates to perform one of three dozen styles of dance.

4 A small statue of Asmodeus carved from celestial gold and decorated with astral diamonds.

Dwarven Empire

Dwarven empires favor materials that come from the earth: stone, precious metals, and valuable gems. Dwarven artwork features motifs that reflect the dwarves' lives as miners and crafters, and it often demonstrates a reverence for their gods. Dwarven empires include Bhaerynden and Shanatar in the Forgotten Realms setting.

250 gp

1 A golden pendant in the shape of a miner's pick.

2 A keg of powerful dwarven ale made at a legendary brewery that was destroyed centuries ago. Magic imbued into the keg has protected the ale from spoiling.

3 A miniature limestone replica of the dwarven fortress Vodenshold.

4 A silver belt buckle engraved with the image of a razorback boar.

1,500 gp

1 A miniature anvil made of silver.

2 A life-sized bronze bust of the dwarven matriarch Hilgard Stonehammer.

3 An oversized silver drinking mug imprinted with the symbol of House Bronzehand.

4 A golden beard comb set with topaz.

2,500 gp

1 A dozen gold necklaces once worn by the famous mercenary Torgut Ironguard.

2 A false beard made of hundreds of thinly beaten adamantine strands.

3 A platinum holy symbol of Moradin.

4 A gilded, illuminated manuscript. It contains the story of how Moradin created the dwarves, along with the deity's holiest teachings.

7,500 gp

1 A ceremonial suit of gold-embossed armor engraved with the royal seal of House Ironbar.

2 A mithral eye patch with a single sapphire set at its center.

3 A codex made of thin sheets of mithral, stamped with Dwarven runes. The book describes the techniques of master smith Gamdor Stronghammer.

4 A large emerald delicately cut in the shape of a hammer.

15,000 gp

1 A set of six golden goblets. One is slightly larger and set with diamonds, while the other five are set with rubies.

2 A golden crown studded with dozens of jewels, including three large rubies.

3 A ceremonial waraxe forged of celestial gold.

4 An adamantine-chased coffin. The lid bears a relief carving of a proud dwarf holding a rune-covered sword.

50,000 gp

1 An ornate adamantine anvil bound with elemental fire, paired with a mithral hammer imbued with the power of elemental earth.

2 A massive diamond known as the Mountain's Heart. It is said that the ancient dwarves mined this stone from the first mountain they ever called home.

3 A twelve-foot-tall marble statue carved by the legendary sculptor Thrane Stoneheart. The statue is said to depict Moradin at his forge, but the face resembles the prince who commissioned the work.

4 A throne made of mithral and adamantine, decorated with complex geometric patterns.

Fey Empire

The empires ruled by elves, eladrin, and other fey creatures bear similar stylings in their art and relics. Nature is a common motif, and the fey craft their artwork of wood more than stone or metal. Fey empires also commonly use magic to enchant their artwork. Fey empires include Illefarn and Aryvandaar in the Forgotten Realms.

250 gp

1 A silver ring engraved with constellations and set with a moonstone.

2 Green silk robes embroidered with flowers.

3 An oak staff carved to resemble a pair of serpents curled around each other.

4 A set of finely crafted nesting dolls. Each depicts a different animal. From smallest to largest, the creatures are as follows: a fly, a spider, a robin, a fox, a wolf, and a bear.

1,500 gp

1 A small silver statue depicting a dancing nymph.

2 A bottle of wine brewed from sunshine. This rare vintage takes nearly a century to properly age, and tastes like pure happiness.

3 A porcelain mask painted with gold and silver to create the stylized visage of a tiger.

4 A slender porcelain vase, painted blue and white with a wave motif.

2,500 gp

1 A crown carved of wood, whose magic makes it as strong as iron.

2 A golden statue of a badger with topaz eyes.

3 A small clay vessel containing seeds of the millennium flower. Among the rarest of flowers, it can be grown only by a master gardener—and takes a thousand years to bloom.

4 A silver collar decorated with black pearls. It is sized for a large cat or small dog, and it bears a tag that reads "Jymith."

7,500 gp

1 A pair of mithral necklaces set with crystals. Both necklaces glow with light equivalent to a candle whenever they are brought close together.

2 A scroll containing lost love poems from the master eladrin poet Soldonus.

3 What appears to be a simple seashell hanging on a length of cord is bound to the spirit of a long-dead water nymph with a magnificent voice. When commanded, the shell sings any song the nymph knew in life.

4 A crystal vase holding a dozen delicate flowers forged of gold, silver, and platinum.

15,000 gp

1 A throne made of enchanted living oak, whose feet grow roots that hold it to the earth. Twin trunks grow from the throne's back, spreading boughs above that provide shade for the creature that sits on it.

2 A golden lyre strung with astral thread.

3 A pair of earrings, each one a slender silver chain set with glittering diamonds.

4 A large birdcage made of mithral and studded with sapphires.

50,000 gp

1 A glimmering silver dress woven with moonbeams.

2 A life-sized mithral sculpture of a snowy owl. It has been magically animated to follow basic commands as though it were a well-trained living bird.

3 A golden fountain depicting leaping dolphins and beautiful merfolk. It is imbued with the power of elemental water, such that any liquid placed within it automatically animates.

4 Wind chimes made of celestial gold. When a breeze blows through them, the chimes sound out like an angelic host.

Goblinoid Empire

Goblinoid empires are the domains of goblins, hobgoblins, and bugbears. Goblinoid empires frequently use violent imagery in their art, and their treasures include ceremonial weapons, armor, and other relics of war. Eberron's Dhakaani empire is an example of a goblinoid empire.

250 gp

1 A humanoid skull delicately etched with the full tale of how a brave warrior killed the skull's owner in glorious battle.

2 A dagger with an obsidian blade and a hilt of ivory.

3 A clay statue of a horned goblin holding out a bowl as though begging for coins.

4 A large golden needle, pointed at both ends, designed to wear as a nose piercing.

1,500 gp

1 A silver goblet, the bowl of which resembles a humanoid skull.

2 A long coat made of winter wolf fur.

3 A set of three-dimensional game boards made of ivory and ebony. The game features a labyrinth with a minotaur at its heart, as well as highly detailed tokens of a goblin, a kobold, a bullywug, and a gnome.

4 A painting depicting the carnage left on the field after a great battle. Its canvas is some type of humanoid skin.

2,500 gp

1 A golden statue of a goblin on wolfback.

2 A complete set of scrolls penned by the legendary hobgoblin general Krungoth Hapshor. These papers contain advice for winning military campaigns.

3 A battle horn crafted of gold and decorated with images of terrible monsters.

4 A platinum ring bearing the image of a skull with two emeralds for eyes.

7,500 gp

1 The skull of an ancient gold dragon covered with gold leaf.

2 An adamantine helmet with a faceplate depicting the visage of a terrible demon.

3 A shield embossed with platinum and engraved with the face of a medusa.

4 A gold statue of a god of war and conquest, with eyes of fire opals.

15,000 gp

1 An iron maiden torture device whose exterior is covered with gold leaf and encrusted with jewels. A relief sculpture of a hefty female bugbear decorates the front.

2 A large cauldron made of adamantine and adorned with gruesome faces.

3 The mummified head of a female goblin. When asked a question, the head animates and answers with a wordy response. (These answers are random; the device cannot predict the future.)

4 A cloak made of elemental smoke.

50,000 gp

1 A spear made of mithral and bound with elemental lightning.

2 A pair of heavy war drums. Their heads are made from the hide of a demon and bound with elemental thunder.

3 A solid gold sarcophagus covered with jewels. The lid is carved to resemble the hobgoblin prince Taldash. Warnings written in Goblin around the edge of the sarcophagus promise a terrible curse on any who disturb Taldash's rest.

4 A spiked collar made from elemental fire.

About the Author

Matthew J. Hanson is a teacher by day and game designer by night. He has written many articles for *Kobold Quarterly*, and he runs a small RPG-publishing company called Sneak Attack Press.

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Perils of the Astral Sea

By Michael E. Shea

Illustrations by Dave Allsop and Milivoj Ćeran

The Astral Sea is an endless space that surrounds the realms of gods, devils, and other advanced beings. It also connects those realms to the worlds of mortals, and some of the most dangerous villains that heroes might ever meet make their homes here. From the majestic mountains of Celestia to the depths of the Nine Hells, the Astral Sea embodies high fantasy.

This article describes three astral villains that the characters might encounter in their voyages: the aleax, the atropal deathscreamer, and the githyanki antipaladin. These antagonists might be unearthed by delvers questing in the depths of million-year-old dungeons, or they might assail the party from dark ships plying the cosmos.

The astral environment also features two unique perils: the fantastic terrain called Dawn War scars and a navigational hazard known as an astral lodestone.

Aleax

The gods often exert subtle influence, but sometimes they require a stronger and more brutal hand to address injustices. When a powerful being defies a god, that deity can call forth an aleax, an entity of pure vengeance, to punish that offender.

An aleax resembles an ageless, armor-clad human with white skin and shining white eyes. Its armor swirls with colors that match the alignment of the summoning deity: gold for good, deep violet for evil, blue for lawful, and crimson for chaotic. The armor of a chaotic evil aleax scintillates with red and violet, while that of a lawful good one shimmers gold and blue.

Absolute Vengeance: An aleax pursues someone who has chosen a path that differs from that person's alignment or the direction of his or her deity. The aleax cares nothing for why it was sent—it will carry out its quest for vengeance even if the miscreant strayed from the path in order to fulfill a mission or was forced to do so by circumstances. An aleax acts according to the will of the god who commands it and cannot be dissuaded from its duty. It exists only to deal out punishment: Crimes have been committed, and the penalty is death.

Aleaxes in Combat: An aleax focuses on a single target and relents only when that target is dead. If its target travels with companions, the aleax brings allies of its own, such as angels or devils that are loyal to the deity the aleax serves. When its target dies, the aleax disappears, returning to the deity that created it until it is again required to mete out retribution.

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Aleax	**Level 26 Soldier**
Medium immortal humanoid	XP 9,000
HP 241; **Bloodied** 120	**Initiative** +22
AC 42, **Fortitude** 38, **Reflex** 38, **Will** 38	**Perception** +25
Speed 8	Blindsight 5, darkvision

Traits

Aleax Focus

The aleax chooses one enemy as its focus at the start of the encounter. Its focus cannot change during the encounter.

Aleax Invulnerability

The aleax has total concealment from creatures other than its focus, and a +5 power bonus to all defenses against area attacks and close attacks from such creatures.

Aleax Resilience

At the start of each of the aleax's turns, any effect on the aleax ends if the effect has a duration, but only if a creature other than the aleax's focus caused it.

Regeneration

The aleax regains 15 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the aleax takes damage from its focus or if it doesn't attack its focus on its turn, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Brilliant Energy Blade** (force, radiant) ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +29 vs. the target's lowest defense

Hit: 2d12 + 21 force and radiant damage.

Move Actions

Divine Hunt (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**

Effect: The aleax teleports up to 20 squares to a square adjacent to its focus.

Triggered Actions

↯ **Divine Justice** ✦ **At-Will**

Trigger: The aleax's focus willingly leaves a square adjacent to the aleax or uses an attack power that does not include the aleax as a target.

Effect (Opportunity Action): The aleax uses *brilliant energy blade* against its focus.

Focus Resonance ✦ **Recharge** ⚁ ⚂ ⚃

Trigger: An attack from an enemy other than the aleax's focus damages the aleax.

Effect (Immediate Reaction): The aleax's focus takes damage equal to half the damage the attack dealt to the aleax.

Skills Insight +25

Str 25 (+20)	**Dex** 25 (+20)	**Wis** 25 (+20)
Con 25 (+20)	**Int** 25 (+20)	**Cha** 25 (+20)

Alignment any **Languages** Supernal

Atropal Deathscreamer

The birth of a deity is a rare event, and a delicate matter that requires the precise balance of stupendous forces. If anything goes awry, the result is a monstrosity: an undead husk animated by residual divine energy, thirsting for the power it never attained.

Relic Hunters: Most atropals are buried or imprisoned in forgotten crypts drifting in the Astral Sea. A few, though, have escaped and search for ancient artifacts, which they believe contain the power to grant them true divinity. Those that have not succumbed to the madness engendered by their existence might try to hide their true nature and employ adventurers to acquire ancient relics. Cloaked and shrouded to hide their horrifying emaciated bodies, they whisper in voices that might be mistaken for those of gods.

Atropal Deathscreamers in Combat: An atropal deathscreamer attacks almost any living creature it comes across. It seeks the most advantageous position to catch as many mortals as it can in its *death scream* while using *life-draining touch* on any who dare engage it in melee.

Atropal Deathscreamer	**Level 26 Controller**
Large immortal humanoid (undead)	XP 9,000
HP 240; **Bloodied** 120	**Initiative** +21
AC 40, **Fortitude** 36, **Reflex** 38, **Will** 40	**Perception** +20
Speed 6, fly 6	Darkvision
Immune disease, necrotic, poison; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant	

Traits

☼ **Blighted Presence** ✦ **Aura** 2

Enemies in the aura regain half the normal number of hit points from healing effects.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Life-Draining Touch** (fear, necrotic, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +29 vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d8 + 21 necrotic and psychic damage.

Effect: The atropal slides the target up to 3 squares.

Death Scream (necrotic, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚁ ⚂

Attack: Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +29 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 5d6 + 9 necrotic and psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

First Failed Saving Throw: The target is instead dazed and weakened (save ends both).

Second Failed Saving Throw: The target drops to 0 hit points. If it is already at 0 hit points or fewer, it dies.

Move Actions

Shadow Stalk (teleportation) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied

Effect: The atropal teleports up to 10 squares.

Minor Actions

Word of Doom (fear) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +29 vs. Will. This attack does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Hit: The target loses all resistances and immunities, and when making saving throws, it must roll twice and use the lower result (save ends all).

Skills Arcana +20, History +20, Religion +20

Str 15 (+15)	**Dex** 26 (+21)	**Wis** 15 (+15)
Con 24 (+20)	**Int** 15 (+15)	**Cha** 29 (+22)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Supernal

Githyanki Antipaladin

Even the most powerful and loyal githyanki fear Vlaakith's mysterious antipaladins. These knights of the Lich Queen devote themselves to her will, and their judgment is absolute among the githyanki. If an antipaladin walked into a dwelling of its own kind, murdered everyone inside, and burned it to the ground, other githyanki would accept the act: The antipaladin did it, so it was justified.

Travelers of the Sea: Githyanki antipaladins undertake pilgrimages across the Astral Sea, often on quests for the Lich Queen, carrying only their armor and silver swords. Some amass small groups of hirelings and Vlaakith loyalists, commanding spelljammers on astral campaigns. Antipaladins rarely travel together, except in extreme circumstances. One such champion of the Lich Queen is usually powerful enough to handle any mission she might command.

Githyanki Antipaladins in Combat: Antipaladins are relentless and cunning, trained from their earliest days to destroy powerful and well-armored opponents. An antipaladin first uses *psionic bonds* to pin a dangerous foe in place and *planar vengeance* to stay close to other targets. If it's in difficulty, it employs *mindwalk* to escape to a more advantageous tactical position.

Antipaladin Villains

An antipaladin can make a great recurring villain for adventures in the Astral Sea. It might arrange ambushes and leave traps to destroy the characters, or turn their comrades and allies against them. More than just an opponent in battle, a githyanki antipaladin is a true nemesis. It knows that its cause is right as it ruthlessly hunts down the adventurers to thwart or destroy them.

Githyanki Antipaladin	**Level 24 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 6,050
HP 220; **Bloodied** 110	**Initiative** +20
AC 40, **Fortitude** 36, **Reflex** 35, **Will** 37	**Perception** +20
Speed 5	
Traits	
Antipaladin Grace	
The githyanki ignores penalties to attack rolls. Its attacks never trigger enemy attacks.	
Standard Actions	
Silver Bastard Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +29 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 21 damage, and the target cannot spend healing surges (save ends).	
Move Actions	
Mindwalk (teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**	
Effect: The githyanki teleports up to 10 squares.	
Minor Actions	
Psionic Bonds ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +27 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The target falls prone, and it is immobilized (save ends).	
Triggered Actions	
Planar Vengeance ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: An enemy unable to spend healing surges while affected by *silver bastard sword* either willingly leaves a square adjacent to the githyanki or uses an attack power that does not include the githyanki as a target.	
Effect (Opportunity Action): Mindwalk recharges, and the githyanki can use it. The githyanki can then use *silver bastard sword* against the triggering enemy.	
Skills Arcana +18, Insight +20, Intimidate +26	
Str 25 (+19) **Dex** 23 (+18) **Wis** 17 (+15)	
Con 20 (+17) **Int** 12 (+13) **Cha** 28 (+21)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Deep Speech	
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, silver bastard sword	

Dawn War Scars

During the Dawn War, gods and primordials built weapons of fantastic destruction, and the Astral Sea still festers with the wounds they wrought. Such scars might gape for a million years, bleeding energy into the ruins of ancient citadels, vaults and arsenals of the gods, or prisons long forgotten. Although these areas are deadly to mortal creatures, astral beings attuned to a scar's energy might settle nearby, feeding off it and using it as a defense.

Effect: A Dawn War scar covers an area between 3 and 6 squares on a side. Each scar deals a specific type of damage: cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, poison, psychic, or radiant. Any non-immortal creature that starts its turn in the scar's area loses any resistance or immunity to the scar's damage type for that turn and takes 15 damage of that type.

Astral Lodestone

These strange objects are found throughout the cosmos. Perhaps they occur naturally, or they might be the remains of weapons from the Dawn War.

An astral lodestone has the ability to entrap creatures that teleport from or to a location near it. Any creature that ventures too close to one, even if not teleporting, can be damaged by mere proximity to this hazard. Wizards sometimes place astral lodestones near their dwellings to keep enemies from teleporting in unnoticed. Spelljammer captains and pirates speak of huge stones floating in the deepest regions of the Astral Sea that can smash vessels to kindling.

Astral lodestones vary greatly in size, from about 3 feet in diameter to the size of a small vessel (a Gargantuan object). They are visually obvious, but only a keen eye for the magical can discern their true nature. The statistics provided below are for the smaller varieties.

Astral Lodestone	**Level 23 Hazard**
Object	XP 5,100
Detect Arcana DC 27	**Initiative** –
Immune attacks	
Traits	
☼ **Crushing Presence** (force) ✦ **Aura** 3	
Any creature that enters the aura is slowed (save ends). Any creature that ends its turn in the aura takes 15 force damage.	
Triggered Actions	
Teleportation Sink (force) ✦ **At-Will**	
Trigger: A creature teleports and leaves or enters a square within 10 squares of the hazard.	
Attack (Opportunity Action): Ranged 10 (the triggering creature); +26 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 3d8 + 18 force damage, and the target ends its teleportation movement in a square adjacent to the lodestone (chosen by the DM) regardless of the intended destination.	
Countermeasures	
✦ **Suppress:** Arcana DC 27 (trained only) as a standard action while in the hazard's aura. *Success:* The hazard's attack and aura cease to function until the end of the character's next turn. *Failure (22 or lower):* The character takes 15 force damage.	

About the Author

Mike Shea is the webmaster of SlyFlourish.com, a site focused on building the better 4th Edition Dungeon Master, and the author of Sly Flourish's Dungeon Master Tips and Sly Flourish's Running Epic Tier D&D Games. Mike lives in northern Virginia with his wife, Michelle, and his dire worg Jebu.

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